DON JUAN DE LAS SIERRAS.



A ROMANCE.

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DON JUAN DE LAS SIERRAS,

OR,

EL EMPECINADO.

A Romance.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

MISS LEFANU,

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For time at last sets all things even;
And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong.
MAZEPPA.

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DON JUAN DE LAS SIERRAS.

CHAPTER I.

Costei gl'ingegni femminili e gli usi,
Tutti sprezzò sin' dall' etate acerba;
Ai lavori d'Aracne, all' ago, ai fusi
Inchinar non degnò la man superba;
Fuggì gli abiti molli e i lochi chiusi,
Chè ne' campi onestate anco si serba:
Armò d'orgoglio il volto, e si compiacque
Rigido farlo; e pur rigido piacque.

TASSO *Gerusalemme.*

ABOUT the time these scenes were acting at Ronda, the French were in

pretty much the same situation throughout the Peninsula.

The mountains of Murcia and Grenada re-echoed the fame of the guerilla Don Juan de las Sierras—Mina was distinguishing himself in the North, and especially in Navarre—Porlière in the Asturias and Castilles, and EL EMPECINADO *every where.*

The reports increased in terror every day respecting this sanguinary Moloch, to whom the best blood of the French appeared the most acceptable sacrifice, and who was said to have taken an oath never to sheath the exterminating sword, as long as a single Frenchman breathed upon Spanish ground. The extent of the injuries he did them resembled rather the rapid and vindictive course of some evil demon than the possible achievements of a limited mortal.

To return to the Serranos. The evening of the day that succeeded to their

entry

entry into Ronda, suddenly, unannounced, his absence unaccounted for, General Gonsalez once more made his appearance among them. The haughtiness of his mien bespoke his still existing pretensions to command.

On his arm leant a beautiful youth, habited in the complete costume of a guerilla chief. Enthusiasm flashed from his eye, exercise had flushed his cheek, and a degree of disorder in his dress, and in the arrangement of his long black hair, which floated down his back unconfined, bespoke the effects of fatigue or haste.

It was night, yet a flood of radiance mimicked the splendor of day, and diffused a lustre over the darkness of the deepest vallies, and on the summit of every pointed rock. Branches of the resinous bark of the pine, lit in the place of tapers, and mingled with a number of lampions found among the miscella-

neous stores of the French, furnished out this spontaneous illumination, by which the mountaineers meant at once to express their exulting joy, and do homage to Don Juan de las Sierras.

From rock to rock, and across the precipitous and narrow paths that sometimes occurred in the mountains, wreaths and triumphal arches were suspended, and female voices were heard in chorus, celebrating, in their artless songs, the success of their young hero, and invocating destruction upon the heads of their enemies. Suddenly a bright flight of rockets was let off, and a shower of light, descending, expired in the path of the travellers.

The younger one turned towards General Gonsalez, and smiled—it was with triumphant pleasure; but the brow of Gonsalez grew dark. He inquired the cause of these festivities.

Every tongue was eloquent in Las

Sierras's

Sierras's praise. Exaggeration lent its aid to his real merit, particularly with the female part of the community.—"He has driven the French from Ronda," said they; "and in two days at farthest he will give battle and annihilate them."

"Say you so?" said Gonsalez, fiercely smiling. "Poor Las Sierras! he has undertaken to pilot a vessel that requires a stronger guidance.—And you, besotted multitude! how are the merits, the vigils, the toil of months effaced in your remembrance, by the accidental triumph of a day!"

The moment he was apprized of the arrival of Gonsalez, General Las Sierras hastened to meet him at the entrance of the town of Ronda, and all cause of discontent seemed buried in success over the common enemy. It was with pleasure that the Serranos beheld their chiefs embrace.—"How like bro-

thers in arms they look!" they said to one another; "and how strikingly resembling are their voices and figures to each other!" but, alas! in *heart* no two men could be more dissimilar.

"I bring you another," said Gonsalez, "whose patriot enthusiasm shames even the courage and spirit of us men."

Don Juan de las Sierras looked at his companion, but it was no longer a patriot, an enthusiast—it was the blushing Constantina, trembling in the presence of him who held her fate at his decision, and who remembered their last meeting in the Guadarramma Mountains, while she still fondly clung to the flattering hope that jealousy had deceived her.

Overwhelmed with a contrariety of emotions, which he would in vain have endeavoured to analyze, Don Juan de las Sierras was almost as trembling and as embarrassed as herself. The sense of his

his innocence in the one instance where she had accused him, struggled with a consciousness that all was not so right since that period as to justify a complete self-defence.

Fortunately the presence of Gonsalez prevented the necessity of any particular address on his part to Constantina. His eyes expressed the tenderness which it was not in his nature to withhold from any female who had once laid claim to it, and Constantina, who had a thousand times since their last meeting, accused herself of unkindness and precipitancy, was too happy once more to behold him safe, triumphant, and, as it appeared, still disposed to love, to ask herself if more of ardent joy might not have mingled with the gentle tenderness of his manner.

The subject of public affairs was immediately started by Gonsalez. Without disclaiming, without assumption of

 merit,

merit, Don Juan de las Sierras stated, with modest simplicity, the situation in which he had found his deserted countrymen, what he had thought it necessary to do, and what he had done.

Don Juan Gonsalez gave him that measured praise which spoke the ascendency he still chose, in virtue of experience rather than of years, to maintain over him.

Don Juan de las Sierras described the perplexity to which they were reduced, by being at once abandoned by their two chiefs, Gonsalez and El Sombrero.

"Make not yourself uneasy about him," interrupted Don Juan Gonsalez; "I am acquainted with the place of his retreat."

"And where is he?" asked Las Sierras.

"Safe," replied Gonsalez, with that peculiar smile which Las Sierras had learnt to interpret as making rather

against

against than in favour of the security of those with the mention of whose name it was united. Unwilling, however, needlessly to offend him with pressing his inquiries about an object respecting whose worth he was uncertain, Don Juan was silent; and Gonsalez professing himself in need of repose, broke up the conference till the morrow.

The next morning Gonsalez was "himself again." The application of Las Sierras to him for advice and assistance was very congenial with his imperious nature. Silently he reassumed the sovereign direction of every thing, as if no interval had taken place between his first investiture and resumption of the supreme command. His words were few, but he was heard to mutter that Ronda was not tenable; and that the enemy must not be suffered to recover from their consternation. It was plain he coincided with Las Sierras in the ne-

cessity of an immediate attack, and its direction he pronounced in two words—"To Campillos."

This was the town to which the French had retired on abandoning Ronda to the Serranos. It was seven leagues from Ronda, at the extremity of the mountains, and situated on a plain advantageous for their cavalry.

The evening of that day was fixed for the beginning of the march of Gonsalez's little army. During the night they bivouacked on the side of a hill near the village of Canète la Réal. With the earliest dawn they proceeded on their march, and were encountered by a detachment of the enemy's horse, within four leagues of Campillos.

This detachment, which had only come out to reconnoitre, on ascertaining the strength of the Serranos, returned towards their quarters; but the mountaineers, who imagined they fled in consternation

sternation from their superior numbers, set up their terrible war-cry, and, rushing on with an impetuosity which nothing could withstand, continued for above an hour the pursuit. The ground, which was broken and irregular, favoured the mode of fighting of the Serranos; but not choosing to engage the enemy in a plain, Gonsalez suddenly checked their ardour, and halted on the heights of Teba to collect and form.

The appearance of the combat, from the peculiar manners of the Serranos, now grew singularly interesting. The village of Teba is an eagle's nest, embosomed in rocks. The women, as usual, taking the strongest interest in the scene, looked on from the surrounding rocks, and encouraged by voice and eye their husbands and lovers to a brave resistance. Mingling religion with their wild heroism, their voices were heard in chorus, addressing a supplicatory hymn to the Virgin.

The French, becoming in their turn the aggressors, advanced, with their infantry and the body of their detachment, to cross a wooden bridge, built over the torrent that flowed at the foot of the barren mountain of Teba.

At first the Serranos received them with a brisk fire; but the tranquil intrepidity of those more disciplined troops seemed to strike a sudden damp over the irregular valour of the mountaineers —a pause ensued—the enemy had almost passed the bridge. Stung with rage and shame, Gonsalez looked indignantly around—the charm by which he commanded their rude minds seemed broken—" Is there none to rally?" he exclaimed.

At this instant a youth, waving in his hand a sword, rushed forward towards the fugitives. Inspiration guided his steps—enthusiasm flashed from his eyes. Advancing to the first that had given

given way, he tore the dishonoured weapon from his hand, and, summoning all who were not cowards to follow him —"Are you Serranos," he cried, "and suffer your native mountains to witness your defeat? Will you endure this shame in the eyes of your women, who would scorn not to show a braver spirit? Haste to redeem your name in your country's eyes, or let us, pushing the enemy beyond the mountains, if we must be disgraced, at least escape the stigma in the place that gave us birth!"

Who could resist that voice, that eye, where female beauty was joined to manly pride? The impulse ran like electric fire through the lines. A thousand "Vivats" resounded in the air—for the heroic being who had breathed a new soul into the fainting combatants was Constantina! They turn again—they collect — they form. Headed by the dauntless Constantina, they advance

once

once more to the attack—the French are repulsed with slaughter—but, not content with that, they continue the pursuit; and it was not till the enemy were driven a considerable way beyond the bridge, that the martial maid returned, to receive the enthusiastic gratulations of her countrymen, and the rapturous applause of Gonsalez.

But there was yet a *dearer one* whose greeting the maid of Ronda turned to meet—one, without whose approving eye all her triumphs would be nothing worth.

Faint, reclining upon the sword that had been the beacon of conquest, the heroine was no more—and, as the momentary enthusiasm passed away, Constantina, who had met hostile squadrons with undaunted eye, trembled like a leaf while awaiting the fiat of Las Sierras.

Bright, beautiful, wonderful as she

had

had appeared, never to his eyes had she been less attractive. Humanity however assumed the form of tenderness, and while, pale and exhausted, Don Juan saw her scarcely able to reply to the admiring exclamations of rival chiefs, he remarked a crimson stain upon her vest, and, advancing to support her, cried—" Merciful Heaven! you are wounded!"

Divided between exhaustion and delight, she cast on him a look of impassioned gratitude and pleasure, while, in a faint voice, she replied—" No, no, be not alarmed—*that blood is not mine.*"

Overwhelmed with a nameless oppression, Las Sierras turned from her with an abruptness quite involuntary. His brain seemed to swim in blood—a thick mist of horror hung over his eyes —yet, to his mental vision *one* object most clearly presented itself—it was *not* the

the Amazonian maid—the bright and terrible Constantina—but the pale, spotless form of a novice weighed down with feminine fear, and received from the midst of surrounding horrors, to the refuge of his supporting arms!

....

From the time of the repulse at Teba, Gonsalez and Las Sierras continued to carry on the war, with various success, against the invaders. Ronda was re-captured by the French, but there was an inexhaustible source of resistance in the unconquered spirit of the Serranos. The place of exact military discipline was supplied by their patriot enthusiasm. If they failed in plans that required combination—if they could not conquer in the plains—they fought admirably among the rocks, behind the walls

walls of houses, and in all places where the cavalry of the French could not be employed to advantage.

In the mountains, the Serranos baffled, by their mode of fighting, the efforts of the French troops, however superior in number. They retired from rock to rock—from post to post—on the approach of the French columns—keeping up an incessant fire, and, like the Parthians, wounding as they fled. The French saw whole columns of their best troops mowed down without the power of retaliating the injuries they received to any thing like the same extent on these light-armed and irregular troops.

The title of "Flies of the Mountain," which, from their harassing and pertinacious mode of attack, both Spaniards and Frenchmen had agreed to give them, could alone furnish an idea of the desultory yet effective mode of resistance they

they had adopted against their enemies.

In these scenes, Constantina exhorted, encouraged, animated all: and the enthusiastic praises bestowed on her by Gonsalez often gave Las Sierras the idea that, were he not too near already by the ties of affinity to aspire to be nearer still, he would have acknowledged the congenial match to his own soul of fire in the Amazonian maid.

But this was not Gonsalez's object. With a community of interests, he had resumed that friendship for Don Juan de las Sierras, which nothing but his crossing him in his favourite plans could shake; and, talking to him with enthusiasm of the charms and virtues of Constantina, expressed his ardent desire to see two persons so dear indissolubly united.

"She is all you say," said Las Sierras, who, though he had long seen and lamented

mented his youthful precipitancy, and felt his whole being penetrated with love for another woman, yet was determined not to escape from the toils wound around him unless he could do so with honour. "But," added he, in a lighter tone, "do you not think she is too great—too noble to need the support of our sex?—a husband would but dim her solitary glory."

"You do her wrong," interrupted Gonsalez with emphasis—"in heroism and genius equal to the far-famed maid of Saragoza, her heart is constant and tender as that of the humblest mountain shepherdess—one object alone possesses it, and he who could betray such spotless truth deserves not the name of man."

That night, as Gonsalez sat apparently intent upon his military plans, and Las Sierras was left to a species of tête-a-tête with Constantina, who had resumed,

sumed, when not actually in arms, the habiliments and occupations of her sex, Gonsalez, suddenly raising his eyes from the map over which he had been bending, said—"It must be so—Las Sierras, Constantina, friends twined about every fibre of this bleeding heart—I have too long trifled with your happiness—a dark cloud hangs over my destiny—I know not how soon I shall be called away—your vows to each other are already plighted in the face of heaven—let to-morrow's sun see them ratified—and whatever future miseries remain for Gonsalez, he will meet them content to leave his Anna's sister to the protection of a husband's arms."

This proposal struck both parties with equal surprise. Trembling, breathless with confusion and delight, the impassioned Constantina awaited Las Sierras's reply. *He* saw, in this apparently sudden appeal, the real object never absent

from

from Gonsalez's thoughts—the desire of securing him by ties stronger than a friendship, which a closer intimacy with his character had converted to mistrust on the part of Las Sierras—the determination to secure the cooperation of a popular chief in his future plans of ambition, whatever they might be, and to prevent the possibility of a relapse into the habits and partialities of early youth in favour of the Duke d'Almarez.

The design was palpable, and disgusted him. Had he been free, he would have shewn his feelings—but, before his departure for the Sierra Morena, he had voluntarily pledged his vows to her who now looked to him for their fulfilment, and should he renew in his own person the perjury of Alvaro? His passion for Louisa was hopeless—worse than hopeless—was almost sacrilege. Whichever way he turned, he sickened at the prospect.

At

At this critical moment, when the colour of his future fate perhaps hung on his decision, a fourth was added to the domestic group in the person of an officer of the Serranos, who brought letters for General Gonsalez, that changed the whole current of his thoughts and feelings.

Turning from the lovers (if such they may be called) he rapidly began the perusal of them, and then said, in a low, mysterious voice—"This is great news indeed! while the drowsy tyrant * fancies he rules and reigns unquestioned at Madrid, above a thousand Spanish Patriots lurk unsuspected yet within her bosom †, and only wait the favourable hour to strike some blow that shall shake his throne to its foundations. But this wants confirmation—and to obtain it some man must go who values neither difficulty

* Joseph. † Historique.

difficulty nor danger where his country's service calls."

"*I* will be that man," said Don Juan de las Sierras, rising—"before to-morrow's dawn I will begin my journey in disguise, and bring you a faithful report ere many days are over."

Absorbed in the concerns that bore paramount sway in his breast, Gonsalez did not observe how very favourable this commission was to the postponing that conclusion which Don Juan dreaded now, as much as he had formerly sighed for it: but Constantina, who could readily find in her own mind an excuse for his preferring glory to every other object, cast on him an approving glance which smote him to the heart.

The rest of the night was employed by the two chiefs in devising the best means for accomplishing their end unsuspected: and the next morning Las Sierras found himself travelling on an

important

important commission, and in a strange disguise, towards the residence of the usurper and—the abode of Louisa!

CHAP-

CHAPTER II.

Could I her faults remember,
Forgetting every charm,
Soon would impartial Reason
The tyrant Love disarm:
But when enrag'd I number
Each failing of her mind,
Love still suggests each beauty,
And sees—while Reason's blind.

The Duenna.

THE peril with which his life was threatened at Madrid was not the greatest danger that awaited Don Juan de las Sierras.

It was true he could no longer show

himself openly there as formerly. The brilliant and successful resistance he had opposed to the best troops of King Joseph in Andalusia, had obtained for our hero the distinction of the tyrant's hatred.

Yet, in spite of this consideration, and of the limited period fixed for his return, Don Juan could scarcely resist the temptation of incurring a new hazard, to inform himself more accurately respecting the welfare of Louisa.

He found Gonsalez had exaggerated the advantages to be expected from his political mission. He did not find so great a number as had been represented ready to embrace the patriot cause: and among those who were so, considerations of jealousy and self-interest prevented them from wishing to coalesce with a leader so despotic as Don Juan Gonsalez.

With a sensation of shame and burning

ing anguish, such as the pure and youthful bosom only knows, Las Sierras heard of his former benefactor, the Duke d'Almarez, as among the most active in winning proselytes from the patriot cause. Like all renegades, this nobleman seemed a fanatic in his new faith, and spared no means afforded him by his specious manners or ample property in gaining over adherents to the French government.

But this was nothing compared to the wonders he heard of Louisa. That pure recluse, that spotless novice, whose virtues, still more than her beauties, had enshrined her in his heart's most sacred adoration, released by her father's influence from her half-formed obligations of religion, and urged by his precept and example to make this world's successes her end and aim of action, was, now, the most brilliant ornament of the court of the usurper. Her eyes achieved more

political conversions than the Duke's persuasions and promises; and he was said confidently to rely on her charms both as the means of securing to herself a brilliant establishment, and of increasing his own triumphs in favour of his adopted sovereign.

By many Spaniards who were not aware of the interest he already took in Donna Louisa, Don Juan was assured, half jestingly, half in earnest, that the term of his patriotism would certainly expire at the moment of encountering her all-conquering eyes. All Madrid rung with the charms of Louisa, and the Duke of Almarez was pronounced the proudest and happiest father the land contained.

With sensations far different from those which were intended to be conveyed, Don Juan de las Sierras listened to these details. Without giving credit to them in their full extent, enough was certainly

certainly true to fill his mind with anxiety and perturbation.

He remembered the innocence, the artlessness, the total ignorance of the world in which he had first found Donna Louisa. He remembered too her touching appeal (which he had conceived at the time to be made to her father) not to attempt to shake the steadfastness and purity of principle that she seemed, herself, conscious required to be vigilantly guarded.—" And had he betrayed his trust?"

Never had any part of the Duke d'Almarez's conduct yet excited such a deep feeling of indignation in the bosom of Las Sierras. To suffer interest and ambition to mislead him so far as even to make the eternal welfare of his only child the sacrifice to it—to be himself the corrupter of that innocence which it was his first, his most sacred duty to guard—when he heard what Louisa

was, and thought of what she *had* been, no name seemed too black for such conduct on the part of a parent: and, justified in his own eyes for hazarding the ambiguous step, by consciousness of the purity of his motives, Don Juan decided that it was impossible to leave Madrid without accomplishing at least one interview with Donna Louisa.

He determined to neglect no means of recalling her to a sense of duty; and, if she did not readily listen to his remonstrances, he had a resource in store that he knew must have power to sober the most volatile mind. *What that resource was, shall be explained hereafter.*

Under favour of the disguise he had adopted, Don Juan had an opportunity of observing her unsuspected at a public morning gala given by the court. He saw, at a glance, that she was, indeed, the idol of a crowd, composed princi-

principally of Frenchmen, mixed with some Spaniards who had become undeserving of the name.

Her beauty was dazzling—her dress magnificent—the light of innocence had departed from her countenance—of that superior innocence that has its birthplace in the soul, and in which, when he last had gazed on her, she shone so resplendent: but its place was supplied by so many foreign witcheries and enchanting graces, that none but a lover who loved with the purity and ardour of Don Juan de las Sierras would have quarrelled with the change. He alone was not in danger from those charms, those bewitching graces—but there *was* a charm his heart could not resist. It was when Louisa sighed. He thought he suddenly saw a cloud overspread her factitious gaiety—that, beneath it, she seemed restless and unhappy: and once, when the Count de Villeneuve, who still main-

tained the most conspicuous post next her, addressed her some flattering observation, which appeared to demand a particular acknowledgment, she rose, approached a balcony, and, fanning herself violently, complained of indisposition and heat.

Don Juan was determined to satisfy himself in a private interview of her real sentiments. Love prompted him to discover the means. In the disguise of a gardener, he contrived to introduce himself, unsuspected, into the pleasure-grounds of the palace of Almarez, and thence, into a small latticed circular pavilion, where he had before had audiences of Louisa.

After waiting there a considerable time concealed beneath the draperies, he heard a light footstep approaching. His heart beat violently. It was indeed the mistress of his thoughts. She entered the pavilion alone, divested of those

sparkling

sparkling ornaments in which she had, in the morning, looked so lovely; but, in his eyes, more dangerous, more interesting far.

Louisa approached a marble table, on which stood a vase of flowers, and, taking up a rose, began scattering the leaves on the floor, as if buried in thought. At length, seating herself near the table, and reclining her head on her hand, a profound sigh burst from her bosom, and her lips murmured—"Oh, for one real friend!"

At this moment, the drapery of the curtain was gently agitated. Louisa started, and would have screamed. Don Juan, advancing hastily to prevent her, said, in a low, hurried, and emphatic voice—"One unguarded exclamation, Donna Louisa, and I am lost—my person is proscribed—and your father's domestics may obtain a reward for proclaiming me."

Recovered from the first shock of surprise, Donna Louisa looked at him with an expression of interest, and replied in a whisper modulated to the softest tones of impassioned gratitude—" And it is for *my* worthless sake you have risked your valued life, Las Sierras!"

Don Juan had been prepared to be received by the altered Louisa with pride, with levity, or caprice, but this immediate show of feeling quite subdued him.

" And what motive," resumed Louisa, in the same under tone, perceiving him unable to speak, " what motive is powerful enough to make you attempt this danger?"

" Ah, Louisa," exclaimed Las Sierras with emotion, " is it not motive sufficient, to be one moment admitted to your sight?" Then conscious that he had unintentionally slid into the language of passion, when he had meant to confine

confine himself to that of admonition—"I have a strong inducement indeed," he resumed, in a graver tone.

Again he hesitated—seeking for words in which to address one so young, so high, so fair, with the chance of a patient hearing. Nature, and the sincere zeal with which he was animated, at length suggested the appeal that respect would have feared to urge.—"Louisa," he said, in a tone of the deepest and most impassioned tenderness, "Louisa, my sister, my friend, you once gave me the privilege of speaking with sincerity—do you withdraw it?"

"On the contrary," she replied, "I never stood in greater need of the counsels of friendship."

Don Juan then resumed—"My feelings and motives are so pure, that I will not hesitate to avow them to you. The short period I spent with you, seems like a bright extract from the dark page

of a life which many feelings combine to whisper me is not destined to be a long or happy one. The idea of your virtues, of your perfection, was enshrined in my heart, like some glorious and saintly vision, to be adored in silence and solitude. When I left you, you were, in innocence and spotless purity of mind, little less than an angel. Louisa, sister of my soul," he continued, his emotion increasing as he proceeded, "tell me I conjure you, that all I have heard is false—that the world has left you, as it found you, uncorrupted."

"Nay," said Donna Louisa, her spirits rising from some unknown cause, and, with them, the arch, coquettish gaiety which an unrestrained intercourse with society had developed as forming a part of her character, "those are harsh terms, most respected Senhor and my venerable monitor, for the innocent indulgence in those triumphs, those pleasures,

in

in which consist the highest glory of our sex. That respectable body called 'the world' has, I presume, not carried its audacity so far as to venture a breath against the real corrrectness of my conduct."

Here her glance, so "wildly beautiful," flashed a degree of disdainful scorn that in another would have been insolent, but that only added a dazzling lustre to her already transcendant beauty—"*Au reste,* as Villeneuve would say, I believe I must plead guilty.

"The novice Louisa, launched into this world of delight and deceit, has been invested by the capricious breath of fashion with the unlimited powers of a Fata Morgana, to the prejudice of many ladies who deserved it better, if it was only in right of seniority, elected to be what English officers would call sovereign queen of hearts—a gratuitous dispenser of life and death. Judge then

if

if the little idol thus absurdly incensed and worshipped must not be sometimes in danger of forgetting she is mortal?

"But there is one thing she can never forget," continued Louisa to Don Juan, in a more tender tone, perceiving her lively rattle had failed to exhilarate him, "that she has a friend in a general on the patriot side, whom she values above all the worthless flatterers that crowd around her. Oh, Don Juan!" she pursued, smiling on him with the most bewitching expression, "how it would rejoice my heart to see you and my father united in one cause! why should we, who are young, distrust the wisdom of the aged? My father is kind, devout, charitable—do you think he would have embraced the party he *has* espoused, but from the conviction it is the best for his country?"

Don Juan turned from the entrancing syren, as if he had feared his virtue and

patriotism

patriotism would melt away before the power of her sighs, her smiles, and eloquent eyebeams.

"Las Sierras!" said Louisa, in a voice still more tender—more imploring, "do not think harshly of me for what is past —I was wrong to treat your admonition so lightly—something within me tells me I was very wrong; but that is one of the inherent faults of my nature —a perverse pride that rises against the best intended reproof, while it is not always sufficiently powerful to repulse as it ought."

Here she stopped—her beautiful face all covered with rosy blushes—"Oh, Don Juan!" she resumed, with downcast eyes, and in a faltering voice, "if the stern virtue, that accompanies your valour and patriotism, does not permit you to look with a compassionate eye on human failings, you should only interest yourself in a woman above vani-

ty—

ty—above the seductions of pleasure, flattery, and pride, and whose bosom, like your own, is inaccessible to every feeling but the love of virtue and her country."

Silent and agitated, Don Juan listened to this animated description—*such a woman* existed; and it was the one whom he was called on, by every principle of honour and constancy, to love; but at the same moment that reason acknowledged the justice of this statement, his rebel heart and wayward feelings whispered that Louisa, interesting even in her faults—irresistible in the humiliation that accompanied the avowal of them, possessed an influence over his passions it was vain for him to struggle against, or attempt to subdue.

"Had you remained here," pursued Louisa, in an altered voice, "I might have proved a different being. But you have listened to my confession, Don Juan,

Juan, now hear what I have to say in my defence. You left me firmly fixed —at least I thought my heart was fixed in favour of a conventual life—true, I did not know the charms of that world I was so willing to relinquish, but I wished not to become acquainted with them. From this holy calm by whom was I first aroused? by my father. By his command I gave up all thoughts of the veil, and was restored to enjoy the rights of the world at liberty."

Donna Louisa paused. Don Juan heard her with a tumultuous throb of emotion, that prevented the possibility of reply. Louisa freed from monastic fetters—Louisa at liberty!—Though he knew this already—though he had heard it before from others, yet to have it confirmed by her own lips, seemed like learning it for the first time, and sanctioned the admission of hopes so new, so enchanting, that it required his utmost steadiness

steadiness in recalling his own humble birth and imperious obligations, to refrain from indulging in those delicious prospects her manner did not seem to check.

Louisa resumed—" My father's great object was to render me a perfectly accomplished woman, and to see me splendidly established. He taught me, that what man wins by wisdom and valour, the weakness of woman might learn to obtain by the exertion of superior address. I was enabled to guess more clearly at any little charm I might possess, than during the moments passed with a certain young cavalier on the banks of the river Guadiana."

Here Louisa smiled with an air of arch and tender reminiscence, that to Don Juan was inexpressibly enchanting. —" Yet," she continued, " it was not overweening vanity—it was not levity, believe me, that misled me—oh ! when

shall

shall I end the painful confession I have undertaken to make! It was the desire of pleasing my father—it was the desire, I fear, of pleasing the whole world——" Here her voice sunk, and her eyes sought the ground.

Don Juan eagerly interrupted her—"But your female friends—but Donna Rosaura—she, surely, would have opposed her voice to the corrupted maxims of a court."

"Donna Rosaura's melancholy," said Louisa, "has, for some cause unknown to me, so increased, that her time is almost wholly taken up with the indulgence of it, and in devotional exercises: but I did not want for a monitor within, that told me of the dangerous path into which I had strayed. Do you think that at Madrid we always wait to be happy before we are gay? oh, no, Don Juan. I could not (like many of those who equalled me in the pursuit of pleasure) flatter

flatter my conscience that hours spent in the neglect of rational and religious duties need never be accounted for. A standard of excellence had been *once* presented to me; and though I might wander from, I never could lose sight of it. Conscience, too, whispered me that I was even less excusable than the gayest of the young coquettes introduced to my acquaintance—amid all their sportive whims, there was generally *one* object to whom *each* wished to make herself really acceptable; but among the crowds that courted, flattered, sued, and sought my favour, not one did my heart ever really prefer."

She ceased, but her agitation shewed something yet remained to be revealed.

Don Juan replied to her frank confession—"Donna Louisa, after this noble avowal of almost involuntary error, *he* must be more or less than man who could dare to press you further; yet deign

deign to answer me one question—is it a lingering love of the conventual life that makes you thus averse to a change in your situation?"

Donna Louisa started—for a moment she fixed her eyes in steadfast surprise on Don Juan, then, slowly repeating— "Is IT?" as instantaneously withdrew them; while the blushes that glowed on her fair cheek too plainly revealed the secret her lips refused to utter.

Now, now was the moment for Don Juan to arm his heart with its utmost fortitude in repelling the too sweet temptation; but love was for a moment triumphant, and would first make himself heard.— "Louisa," he said, in a voice scarcely audible from conflicting emotions, "you have surprised from me a secret that death nor tortures could never have wrung from me—I love, I adore you, and my passion can only end with my existence—but, in the moment of its

its avowal, I must add, that it is wholly without hope, for did not my humble fortunes forbid me ever to aspire to your hand, there yet exists a still stronger obstacle in a fatal engagement, formed in a rash moment, while yet ignorant even of the existence of your charms."

He paused, astonished at his own courage or madness, that had led him thus voluntarily to extinguish his own hopes, by making, unasked, this mortifying confession.

The instantaneous change in Louisa's countenance shewed him it had taken full effect.—"Oh, pride support me!" she exclaimed, in a smothered voice, "that I should have lived to provoke such a reply!" and drawing down her veil to conceal her face, she rushed hastily past him, and vanished from his sight.

Their conference broke off so abruptly, that Don Juan was prevented from

commu-

communicating to Louisa the circumstance for which he had principally attempted the interview.

Stupified, overwhelmed, amazed, Don Juan cursed his own precipitate folly. He durst not call, or follow her for fear of a discovery; he threw himself on the marble floor of the pavilion and asked his heart what demon had tempted him to poison the most delicious moment of heartfelt communication he had ever enjoyed with Louisa, by selecting it for this unasked, this ungrateful, this most unwelcome avowal—the avowal of a truth he had often deprecated Louisa's hearing, and which might have been, at least, postponed, if not prevented altogether by the various and unforeseen accidents of human life. He saw he had fatally wounded her proud though tender spirit. To hear such a confession from his own lips seemed to her as if she had been rejected. The only way

he could account to himself for the conduct he had held on this occasion, was, that in the hurry and surprise of delight produced by the discovery that he was not indifferent to Louisa, he had feared the total overthrow of his better feelings, and had been prompted to interpose an insurmountable barrier between himself and his own inclinations, lest their imperious force should betray him into some engagement with Louisa inimical to the fulfilment of the vows he had plighted to her rival.

In this conclusion, which came pretty near the truth, his moral instinct had served him a better turn than his will, if left to its free agency, would probably have done. Be that as it may, he had never felt more miserable; and, as Constantina was the sole though innocent cause of his unhappiness, never felt less kindly towards that most ill-fated maiden.

The object of his mission was accomplished.

plished. Don Juan knew that he ought not to delay a single hour his return to Gonsalez: yet, the thought of this return and all its consequences filled him with loathing and abhorrence. Love at length confessed, reigned supreme master in his agonized bosom, and he felt that he was too young to be a statesman.

To leave Louisa without forgiveness was worse than death; yet how presume, unasked, to intrude on her again? how hope, or even wish, under his circumstances, that she should discover him?

Don Juan was, now, every way surrounded by danger, but it was a danger he scorned to think of. All the next day he passed in the environs of Madrid—sometimes involuntarily avoiding observation—sometimes, *as* involuntarily contemplating every female figure he encountered, as if it had been possible

the high, the fair, the proud Louisa, could be met unattended.

At length, in a walk not very distant from the palace of Almarez, an unseen hand dropped a paper at his feet. It seemed indeed to fall from a tree: he could no way account how it had been conveyed to him, but it was rapture enough that it *was* conveyed, and that it proved to be from Louisa. The paper contained these words:—



"I am little used to sue for pardon—but nobly to repair a fault cannot but raise the highest. I own, then, I was wrong—and that you acted, as you ever have done, according to the dictates of the purest honour. I have more to say, which, if it has not become indifferent to you to hear, hasten to the convent

convent of the Sisterhood of St. Clare in this city, and do as directed.

"LOUISA D'AVELLANA Y ZAHARA D'ALMAREZ."



After the first thrill of joy produced by the contemplation of this signature, Don Juan fancied he saw in its pompous minuteness and length, so unusual in billets of this description, a new failing in his proud and capricious Louisa, who wished to mark the height from which she was willing to stoop, in opposition to the humbler claims of any rival she might possess in his affections.

He flattered himself that the gradual discovery of different weaknesses would diminish the ardour of his love, without reflecting that it was its very intensity which made him almost grateful to Louisa for any fault that he could set in

 opposition

opposition to her various and too irresistible charms.

Then new ideas came—Louisa had watched—or caused to be watched, his footsteps—how strong must have been the interest that, without guide or clue, had enabled her thus to hold intercourse with him, a proscribed, disguised wanderer! She must have communicated her design to some emissary—and might not that emissary betray his life? Still, he had seen no one. Perhaps Louisa (though in some manner inconceivable to him) had foreseen and guarded against that too. At all events, life was at this moment an object of inferior importance, for he was at the gate of the convent of St. Clare!

He was received by a mysterious looking personage, who, after conducting him through several winding ways and dark passages, produced a disguise which seemed to be the habit of some

elderly

elderly nun, or person holding an official situation in the convent. He made him a sign to put it on; and thus love, which had, the day before, converted Don Juan into a gardener, saw him now in a still more grotesque disguise.

The person who had thus equipped him, now opened a small door that led to another part of the convent gardens, and pushing him in, left him to his own reflections. They were presently interrupted by the approach of a novice's light figure seen through the trees. Don Juan's heart beat thick and tumultuously—too many associations were recalled by this dress for even his present anxieties to banish them. The novice approached—"Fear not," she said, in the soft voice of Louisa—"there are none to overhear our conference."

For a few moments Don Juan could only express, in incoherent terms, the gratitude, the delight, he felt, on being

 permitted

permitted once more to breathe his sentiments to Louisa.

"Hush, no more of that!" said she, archly smiling and placing her finger on his lips—"I come to talk of my faults—on no other pretext would I seek a conference with Don Juan." Then, resuming her seriousness, she sighed, and a few tears fell from her eyes—"Las Sierras!" she said, in a penetrating voice—"did you ever hear of the prisoner who, liberated and exposed too suddenly to a rush of vital air, dropped down dead, unable to endure so great a blessing?—of the blind man, who, on being restored to sight, was inconsiderately permitted to admit at once the flood of day to his yet feeble vision, and fell the victim of his headlong rashness? Such is my fate—my history—I was removed too hastily from the stillness of monastic, to the broad glare of public, life—there was no gradation observed—no interval

allowed—

allowed—for my mind to acquire steadiness—to give firmness to my principles. I became the victim of flattery and adulation, and can only recover my peace of mind in the place where, alone, I ever enjoyed it. In a convent I will end, as I began my days."

"What here?" whispered Las Sierras, with a shudder.

"No," replied Louisa solemnly, "but at Llerena—and you, who removed me from a mother's care, must restore me to it. Why start, Las Sierras? it must and shall be done—it is my only refuge from folly. I dare not trust myself—and my natural guide misleads me—but with my angelic mother——"

"Donna Louisa, forget this idea," said the agitated Las Sierras—"even were it possible for me to apply for, and obtain the permission of those who have a right to decide for you, not for worlds would I be again your companion in such a journey, but——"

"Then," interrupted Louisa, "I am lost indeed—I have no friend on earth who interests himself in me, and, in eight days, the hated Villeneuve will receive my hand." She now urged again the possibility of being reconducted by Las Sierras into Estramadura.

The spoiled child of transient prosperity, and still too ignorant of the world—accustomed to see her will a law, and violent and decisive in all her determinations, she exhibited, in this short scene, the vehemence, the passion, the insinuating graces that had once rendered her mother Elvira an object of such danger to herself and others.

Don Juan felt her power, but possessed a fatal antidote to oppose it—"Louisa," he said, in a melancholy voice, "you must resign this wish, and learn—oh that I should have the hard lesson of teaching you!—to detach your soul from your sainted mother—she now only requires your prayers."

Louisa

Louisa looked at him as if still willing to doubt his meaning, and Don Juan was obliged more particularly to inform her of what he had learnt in his last return to the South. The sight of some church vessels of gold and silver among the spoils of the French, taken at Ronda, had induced him to make particular inquiries respecting the fate of the nuns at Llerena, and he found that the poor Elvira's apprehensions had been too well justified. Shortly after her consigning Louisa to his care, their convent had been broken open by the enemy, and plundered of every thing valuable; and her constitution, already injured by the cruel violence of her husband, and the severities inflicted in penance, had sunk under this shock, which terminated, in a few, days, her sufferings and her life.

Though he sunk as much as possible of this detail, the main fact was suffi-

 cient

cient to overcome the wretched Louisa —"I have now no hope in life," she faintly said. "Oh, Juan! in two days, *twice* to pierce my heart!"

Again, Don Juan was ready to accuse himself of precipitancy, though, before they met, he had decided this communication must be made.

A nun now approached the fainting Louisa — "Leave me — I am with friends," she whispered, feebly waving her hand; and the distracted Don Juan, his heart bleeding for every wound he had inflicted, found himself, he scarcely knew how, divested of his disguise, and once more breathing in the streets of Madrid.

The important interview was past—he had now assuredly no pretext for remaining—yet to leave Louisa in misery—perhaps ill—was more than his fortitude could endure. After a few hours of feverish repose, he rose and wandered

in

in the direction of the palace of Almarez.

By the lights waving to and fro in her bedchamber he saw that Louisa was returned—but how returned? perhaps ill—perhaps dying. His anxiety became insupportable.

Presently a dark figure issued from the palace—it advanced in his direction —a second billet was slipped into his hands—it only contained these words;—

"I am chastened but not destroyed. Henceforth you shall know me an altered being. As the first fruits of my penitence, receive, oh Las Sierras! my injunction to waste no more time on me or my calamities, but hasten to redeem your doubly pledged honour.

"Louisa."

Don Juan pressed the writing to his lips, and, perhaps, the return to his duty came recommended to his wayward heart by its being the command of an adored mistress.

One consolation he endeavoured to derive from the past—Louisa's mourning for her mother, however privately observed, must necessarily plead with her father to induce him to postpone her nuptials with Villeneuve: and with this reflection he tried to sooth his mind, as he again took the way to the Serrania de Ronda.

CHAP-

CHAPTER III.



Where dost thou lead me?————
————Oh, my dear, charming ruin!
Where are we wandering?

Venice Preserved.

WITHIN a league of Ronda, Don Juan de las Sierras had again occasion for the exercise of that prompt humanity by which, still more than by his valour, he had ever distinguished himself.

It was nearly night, but, by the clear light of the fires of olive-wood, which, since the beginning of the war, the mountaineers always kept kindled as beacons along the sides of the hills, he distin-

distinguished a traveller engaged in unequal combat with several of the Serranos, who had set upon him with a fury prompted by the quantity of baggage with which they saw his mules were loaded. He was attended by only one old servant; and, as far as Don Juan could guess by the imperfect glimpses he could obtain of his figure, was himself an aged man.

Shocked at perceiving how little all his efforts had been able to tame the inherent ferocity and predatory disposition of the mountaineers, he discovered himself, and called on them in a loud and authoritative tone to desist,—"Shame on you to turn your arms on the defenceless traveller!" he cried. "Do you forget you are Las Sierras's Serranos?"

"Ay, but we are equally Gonsalez's guerillas!" one ruffian replied; "and in his name we claim our right of plunder."

Don

Don Juan now flew to the defence of the traveller; and, being well armed, soon turned the scale of combat in his favour. Two of the assailants he disabled, and the others, daunted, though they affected at first to brave him, by the unexpected presence of their chief, fled in precipitation and disorder, and left Don Juan to the gratitude of the persons he had rescued.

He conducted the old man and his attendant to Montejaque, where he had, for the present, taken up his own quarters; and begging him to consider himself as in a home of honour and safety, consigned him to needful repose.

Don Juan was surprised, after the occurrences of the night, to find his guest stirring before him.

He appeared a stout, though aged veteran; was dressed like a sea-faring man, and armed with richly mounted pistols and a dagger. He spoke Spanish fluently,

ently, but his face had not the least indication of being that of a European. It was bronzed of the deepest olive, and intersected with delineations of plants and flowers in blue, that looked as if they had been done with gunpowder.

Don Juan waited for the stranger to speak first. He did not long delay his acknowledgments for the services of the preceding night.—"To the valour of a son of the pure unmixed blood of Spain, Senhor," said he, "you join the courtesy of those children of the desert who do not even ask the name of the traveller they entertain beneath their roof."

Don Juan smiled at the idea of his courtesy being compared to that of the wandering Arabs, but said—"Since you notice the cause of my reserve, I shall feel happy, Senhor, if you are willing to reward it with a disclosure of your name."

"I would

"I would by St. Jago!" answered the old man, "if I knew it myself." Then added, laughing, "You think me a lunatic I fear, but I have lived in so many countries, and been called by such various appellations, that I know not to which I ought to give the preference—My real name is Alvarez de Sylveira."

Here Don Juan listened in breathless attention; for Ximena had informed him that Sylveira was the family name of his own father before he assumed by adoption that of the Duke de Solis.

The old man resumed—"I have been a wanderer over the earth these forty years, and now revisit my native country in the, perhaps, vain search of those ties which, in my youth, I too much neglected.

"My father was of an ancient but decayed stock in Grenada—I married early a beautiful girl, who bore me, in the first year of our union, a son, the image

of

of herself, and who ought to have attached me doubly to the mother—but home has few attractions for the mariner. Before my marriage I had made one voyage to the new world, and our great Columbus never longed more ardently than I did to set out on a second.

" I persuaded myself it was the desire of providing better for Inez and our little Alvaro, but fear me much, Senhor, it was at bottom little better than a villainous, wild, wandering disposition.

" Be that as it may, my first venture to the Indies was successful, and I was afterwards tempted to visit the still richer regions of Mexico and Peru. But by the time I had acquired the wished-for competence, I was destined to be deprived of the reward of all my labours. News reached me, at Lima, of my poor Inez's death; but to this fatal intelligence was added the grateful information that

our

our only child had been taken under the protection of the Duke de Solis, a grandee of the first class, who had engaged to educate and provide for him.

"Thus satisfied respecting his safety and welfare, I indulged the blameable selfishness of grief, which inspired me with the strongest reluctance to return to the scene of my lost happiness. You will wonder, Senhor, at this expression of my feelings, as I seemed to set so little value on the possession of my wife's affection; but, soon as she was no more, all the good qualities of my dear Inez returned to my remembrance in their early colours. I lamented the roving temper which so soon had driven me from her, yet still found no relief for my troubled mind so efficacious as continuing to rove.

"I left the happy climates of the Sun to visit other countries of America. Then, impelled by the same restless wish

for

for change, quitted that continent for Asia. Made myself thus acquainted with every race of men, from the North American savage, on whom civilization never dawned, to the Arab who still bears rude traces of being born in that part of the world which was its cradle.

"I lived with different tribes in different countries, conforming to their customs, and submitting, as you see, even to their barbarous ideas of personal decoration.

"At length, the edge of grief was blunted by time, and I became desirous of revisiting my native land, and embracing a son grown up to manhood. But, as I was preparing for this change, information reached me that my Alvaro, after having been accomplished in every attainment fitted to enable him to shine with the first cavaliers in Spain, had fallen in a duel with a nobleman at Madrid."

Here

Here Don Juan, who could not doubt the identity of the aged Captain Alvarez, was at a loss to imagine how or why he could have been so deceived; but doubted not the report had some connexion with the infidelity of his ill-fated father, and that he had had a *rencontre*, though not fallen by the hand of the father or brother of the lady whom he had espoused at Madrid.

"Having now no further motive to revisit Spain," resumed the old man, "I returned to a seafaring life—obtained the command of a vessel, and was noted in many a hard fought battle, both for intrepidity and good fortune. But the desire of returning to my native country, though convulsed with war and desolate to me, resumed its whole sway, as the passion of my age.

"I landed at Cadiz, and was journeying on towards Grenada, when, after experiencing mercy and hospitality from the

the wildest savages, I might have fallen a victim to my own countrymen, but for the fortunate accident which brought you, young and brave Senhor, to my assistance."

There was something in Alvarez's story, which, situated as he was, produced an almost superstitious effect on the mind of Don Juan. He seemed fated from hereditary frailty to prove false to the first mistress of his heart—but soon, the native generosity of his mind rising above the unmanly weakness of this impression, he determined, on the contrary, to prove, notwithstanding the conduct of his grandfather to Inez, and of his father to Marcella, that *there was at least one Sylveira* who could be constant to his vows.

Exhausted with the long recital, the venerable captain was now as little inclined to be communicative as himself. After taking some refreshment, and a pro-

proportion of the Andalusian grape, the native hilarity of the sailor revived, and he renewed with added earnestness his former expressions of gratitude to his young deliverer.

"That which a poor old man can offer in return," he said, "is yours, Senhor, by right. 'Tis but a few curiosities collected in my long and painful wanderings—some shavings of the tulip-tree, a little superior bark, a specimen of the poison of the upas, and similar trifles. Hollo, Antar!" he called to his swarthy attendant, "bring here the baggage with which the mules were loaded."

Don Juan, who perceived the aged mariner was a strange mixture of drollery and sentiment, was sure some secret meaning lurked beneath these words, and awaited in patient silence what should follow.

The bales, when unpacked, discover-

ed

ed wealth, the produce of traffic or successful adventure, sufficient to gratify the avarice of a Cortez or a Pizarro; and the Captain informed him it was only a part of the treasures which he had successively lodged in different banks of Europe.

Las Sierras smiled—"Truly, Senhor," he said, "your bark is most potent, and even your poison would, in this country, be reckoned a remedy for most diseases."

Alvarez replied—"Being *si bien en fonds*, as our accursed invaders would call it, and having no relative to claim a just title to my wealth, you must permit me to indulge my grateful fancy, Senhor, by enriching the only benefactor I ever knew. At the same time I confess it gratifies me to think I do not bestow my treasures on an obscure Serranese, but place them in the hands of a patriot General, as funds to contribute

bute towards maintaining the independence of the Peninsula."

Nothing is so welcome as praise from those whom we desire (from their merit or affinity to us) to please; particularly when *that* praise is bestowed upon desert alone, and that the giver is unconscious of any other claim upon his partiality.

At this moment Don Juan felt himself deservedly rewarded for that noble daring by which he had made himself a name denied him by his unkind fate; and, elevated by this consciousness to a pitch of spirits with him unusual, he was tempted to trifle a few moments, as General Las Sierras, before he revealed himself to the gallant and artless seaman as his nearest living kinsman.—"The sentiment is worthy of a Spaniard," he gravely said, "and I would accept your offer, Senhor, but that I fear it might not be doing strict justice to your heirs.

 Notwith-

Notwithstanding the report of your son Alvaro's early death, I have been credibly informed he lived till a much later period, and left a son who yet survives him."

The aged are tenacious of any impression they have once adopted, and sometimes unwilling to change it even for one that might be supposed of a nature more satisfactory. The hope of embracing any of his family had long ago expired: the flame of Spanish patriotism, kindled at the altar of private gratitude, succeeded, and gently warmed Alvarez's heart; and he seemed half angry with Las Sierras for the suggestion that put his inclination and duty at variance.

"I tell you I received positive information," he said, "that my only son was dead. No mention was made of his being married—and even supposing I should at length discover a graceless heir

heir in a grandson, perhaps instead of converting my treasures to the best use, he might dissipate them in follies, or sigh for the death of a grandfather who finds himself blest and preserved in the friendship of a noble stranger."

"On the contrary," replied Las Sierras, "I feel confident your grandson would coincide with me in the only justifiable manner of disposing of any part of what is yours. But come, Captain Alvarez, this trifling is unworthy both of you and me: you see your only living relative in the at once fortunate and unfortunate Las Sierras, and I will relate to you, as far as it is in my power, the singular and ambiguous tissue of events that still cloud my destiny."

Here Don Juan communicated to Alvarez de Sylveira the principal circumstances of his life, from the moment of his adoption into the family of Almarez, to that of his last meeting with

Ximena, whose dying words had conveyed to him so many important particulars till then unknown to him.

The variety of scenes in which he had mingled had accustomed the old Captain to such sudden and surprising events, that he was less overcome by this discovery than might have been expected. He retained not a doubt that Las Sierras was, indeed, all that remained to him of his once loved wife Inez and her son Alvaro. All that both these kinsmen found it difficult to account for, was the reason of Captain Alvarez having been abused by a false statement of his son's death.

The spirits of the old seaman however rose buoyant at finding he was not to be contradicted in his favourite scheme of aiding the cause of Spanish patriotism in the person of a patriot general—"But, by San Nicolas," he added, with his characteristic humour, "had I discovered

covered my grandson in some renegade or degenerate Spaniard, he should have gone halves with the young hero towards whom I felt my heart attracted from the first moment of our meeting."

Fortune now seemed to have ceased to frown on Don Juan de las Sierras. Behold him, by a sudden turn, elevated to the top of her wheel; and even to *his* mild, pensive disposition, those clouds seemed to disperse, that had long filled his youthful mind with presentiments of melancholy.

Don Juan soon experienced that there is a magic in wealth, felt by the most simple, as well as the most polished people. Whatever consideration he had formerly enjoyed, from his worth, his talents, and public services, was increased in a quadruple proportion, now that he was acknowledged heir of the rich Alvarez. His influence became all-pow-

erful; and, as Mina had obtained the surname (rather than title) of King of Navarre, from having conquered that province from the French, so the once destitute orphan, Las Sierras, found himself little short of being hailed king, as he was already Conservator of the liberties of Andalusia.

Another consideration, spite of himself, would intrude—did not this splendid accession of fortune entitle him to aspire to the highest of the Spanish fair? It was an idea he durst not dwell on.

To return to Gonsalez—incapable of cherishing envy, however he might, for a moment, be stung by that jealous avarice of praise, to which the noblest minds are subject, the brave partisan sincerely rejoiced in his young friend's prosperity, and announced that, as his own services were no longer required, from his place being so worthily supplied, he should, in a short time, quit Andalusia, for some

scene

scene more in want of his inspiring presence.

To rouse the Spanish spirit wherever it slumbered, and to keep alive the inextinguishable animosity between the two nations, seemed the sole purport of his tumultuous, yet joyless existence. In pursuance of this object, he hurried from place to place, like an active and avenging demon, admired by some, feared by all, and *known to none.* It was he who had first introduced discipline into the rude Serrania: but Las Sierras had brought it to perfection.

More respected than loved, the departure of Gonsalez was viewed by the Serranos with indifference; but it was not with indifference the patriot Spaniard prepared to take his last leave of Las Sierras. His friendship for him, founded on a sympathy strange and mysterious, for it was assuredly *not* that of character, could only be shaken by

 one

one circumstance, and *that one* of the most improbable occurrence—the apostacy of Las Sierras from the patriot cause. But if——Oh that terrible if!—Whenever Gonsalez suffered it to cross his imagination, implacable resentment, sublimed into imaginary virtue by its alliance with patriotism, whispered to him to strike and spare not, though the dagger should reach a brother's heart.

Fatal sophistry! that can confound right and wrong, and convert into the first of virtues the darkest crime! But Gonsalez possessed the strongest assurance that in *this* instance at least, he should never be tempted to cruelty; for, when he and Las Sierras exchanged a last embrace, the latter was departing in the full intention to rivet by the strongest ties, the united bonds of love and patriotism, by claiming the long promised hand of Constantina. She was at Seville, with the Abbess of a

convent

convent whose fame for sanctity had induced the martial maid to seek her, in the intention of obtaining a blessing upon the future enterprises of the patriots.

"My mission in Andalusia," said Gonsalez, "is fulfilled. In looking forward to the union of Constantina with my friend, I bless the power which has, at length, bestowed on that fortunate maid the reward of her exemplary virtues. I may not witness it; but, oh, Las Sierras, though we part for a season, we part to meet again!"

"Yes assuredly," replied Don Juan, "*we meet again.*"

Yet a cold and inexplicable chill ran through his blood as he mechanically repeated these words after the terrible and incomprehensible Gonsalez.

Though expected to return every day, Constantina was absent from Seville at the time of Don Juan's arrival in that city. A sick sister had obtained

 a dispen-

a dispensation for a short absence into the country, and expressed a desire to be accompanied by the far-famed and exemplary Constantina, with which request she had instantly complied.

Every thing Las Sierras heard of her contributed to increase the idea, already entertained, of her various merit; and, if merit ever gained a heart, that of Don Juan would have been unalterably Constantina's.

While things were in this situation, word was brought to him that the Duke of Almarez and family were arrived at Seville. Their relative situations were much changed since Don Juan had felt obliged, at Madrid, to avoid an interview with that nobleman. The battle of Talavera had given a fresh impulse to the minds of the patriots, and in the same proportion depressed the spirits of those who adhered to the French party.

At Seville, besides, General Las Sierras

erras was in the very focus of his influence—he therefore thought the common duties of society required he should pay *one* visit of respect to his former benefactor; yet, he could scarcely restrain a sinister impression that every circumstance seemed to thwart his good intentions, and expose him to the dangers of temptation. He was come to Seville, expressly to fulfil his engagements with Constantina. Chance effects her absence, and throws him, once more, within Louisa's sphere of influence!

CHAPTER IV.

——— ———You take it
To heart for flying but a mile before 'em;
And, to say truth, 'twas no flight, neither, sir;
'Twas but a walk, a handsome walk.

BEAUMONT *and* FLETCHER.

THE circle assembled at the sumptuous residence of the Duke d'Almarez gave the idea that, whatever might be his reason for revisiting the neighbourhood of his paternal estates, he had merely transported the society of Madrid to Seville.

In the midst, and, as usual, by far the most conspicuous figure—unconvince-able

able and unconvinced—unschooled by adversity, and rising elastic from depression, stood the Count de Villeneuve, haranguing the assembled group, and proving most admirably, that his countrymen—and, above all, the regiment he commanded at Talavera—would have indubitably defeated the enemy if—the enemy had not beaten *them.*

"It was entirely the fault of that benêt de Joseph—between friends," turning to the Duke d'Almarez with an inexplicable glance, "we may venture to call him *gros benêt,* and to confess *there are others* would fill his station better—il nous obligea de combattre dans un terrain inégal. The genius of Victor and Sebastiani itself was obliged to cede to natural difficulties—we war with men, not against nature and the gods—had he commanded us to advance with the *corps de reserve,* c'etait fait des Anglais—au contraire il sonna la retraite."

"But,"

"But," objected Don Antonio de Medina, "it cannot be denied the French generals did not choose to trust to the chance of the next day's engagement—they drew off during the night, and retired to their first position upon the Alberche."

"Hé, diable! would you know better than those great men?" interrupted the brigand Count petulantly; "they did not lose the battle—they only yielded the victory. Tenez, je m'en vais vous expliquer tout cela—Imagine this glass of wine the Alberche, and this water the Tajo—here," taking up a beautiful marble timepiece, "is the corps de reserve — here stands Marshal Victor's corps, and there——" in the vehemence of action the Count let the valuable ornament slip through his fingers, and fall upon the floor. One of the sculptured figures was injured, and the glass broken to atoms.

Though

Though preserved, by the habitual influence of a sacred sorrow, from the blessed privilege of fretting about trifles, Donna Rosaura, who valued the sculpture on many accounts, did not greatly relish this new *Cascata delle Marmore*, particularly as the Count, who was a great deal too much of the new school to make the slightest apology, only laughed, and said, with the utmost sangfroid—" Aha! j'ai joue de malheur aujourd'hui—this is the third piece of mischief I have done since I have been in the house—it reminds me of my breaking a superbe glâce at la princesse Pauline Borghésé's with a *devil.* But, allons donc, il faut récommencer." And without further ceremony he was arranging the shattered timepiece and the other articles in their former military position, when a new turn was given to the conversation by the entrance of General Las Sierras.

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He was received by the Duke with real or affected cordiality, but Villeneuve turned pale with anger at this interruption to his desire of shining, and at the effect it produced on the hitherto languid cheek of Louisa, which was now suffused with the brightest crimson.

The circle soon became reduced to the family party, and when the Duke found himself alone with Las Sierras, his language and behaviour were more incomprehensible than ever. He talked as if undeceived, wearied, and disgusted, with every person and every thing which had till lately formed the whole occupation of his existence—spoke of the delights of ease and leisure, the pleasures of retirement, and, at length, hinted his intention of withdrawing entirely from public life, to finish his days at the Castle of Almarez.

Here Las Sierras interrupted the Duke, to inform him of the measures he had taken

taken to preserve that castle and demesne untouched amid the surrounding flames of war.

The Duke thanked him with a cordiality greater than he expected.—"But we were always chivalrous enemies, Las Sierras," he added, "or rather, there could be no *real* enmity between persons situated as we were with regard to each other. There existed always a principle of reunion—did there not, Las Sierras?"

He then inquired, with an appearance of the most flattering interest, respecting Don Juan's recent good fortune, the report of which he had confusedly heard.

When Don Juan had concluded, the Duke congratulated him with renewed friendliness, and then said—"The influence you have thus attained, though by adventitious means, you will know how to turn to the best advantage: and since Fortune has at length smiled upon you,

you, I do not see but that you have rather reason to rejoice in, than to regret, her frowns in youth's early season."

"How so?" asked Las Sierras.

"Why, had you not been left an orphan, unconnected, both your public and private feelings might have been submitted to the will of an arbitrary father; whereas you made your own election—you chose both the paths that lead to love and glory—in selecting both a friend and a mistress were left to your own unbiassed judgment; and now, if I may judge by the placidity of that open brow, only await the completion of your wishes in a union with Constantina, for your pursuits to be crowned with perfect happiness—is it not so, Las Sierras?"

There was so little of the expression ascribed to him at that moment in the countenance of Don Juan, that a more suspicious nature would have instantly perceived

perceived the insidious purport concealed under the calm smile and measured tones of the secretly triumphant d'Almarez; but Las Sierras only replied, with a sigh—"The liberty you speak of, my lord, is, to the young, most frequently a misfortune. Happy those who are checked by the power and wisdom of their elders from following the rash impulse of their earliest inclinations!"

"Then you acknowledge," resumed the Duke, "that the heart's first choice is not always that which our matured reason wishes to abide by?"

Unwilling to suspect the extent of his diabolical artifice, yet unable otherwise to discern the drift of this painful discourse, Las Sierras looked at him as if he would have said—"To what purpose thus needlessly torture my feelings?"

"Give me your hand," continued the

wily

wily Duke, "while I acknowledge that this concession is gratifying to paternal vanity and weakness. Yes, Las Sierras, you may well look amazement, but I declare to Heaven, that, were not your vows already engaged, I would prefer for my daughter a patriot hero, encircled with the rays of his own well-earned glory, and (in the place of a withered genealogical tree) covered with fresh laurels of his own gathering, to all the degenerate grandees, or upstart princes, that ever arose from the breath of ancient despotism, or modern usurpation."

Agitated and oppressed with the new and tantalizing ideas presented to his imagination, Las Sierras saw not that the Duke was, in every apparent variation, still the same—that it was a falling favourite—a "traitor double-dyed," who began to see the hollow nature of the hopes in which he had trusted, and who already,

already, in his guilty dreams, anticipated a counter-revolution, that addressed him —he perceived not that the Duke was making a last desperate effort to secure, at all hazards, his own personal advantage, and to intrench himself, in case of change, within the influence of a powerful leader on the patriot side—he saw only the father of Louisa, tendering to his acceptance her perhaps willing hand; and the conflict between love and honour, the desire of attaining the good thus seemingly placed within his reach, united to the consciousness of the impossibility of doing so without relinquishing every cherished feeling of principle and humanity, occasioned a disorder and confusion in his mind, that almost alienated his powers of reason.

Though his emotion was too evident to pass unnoticed, the Duke did not choose to observe it; but having once thrown out this idea, resumed the habitual

bitual stateliness of his manner, and after conversing with his former *protégé* for some time on indifferent topics, proposed joining the ladies, who were preparing to take a turn on the Prado.

Don Juan shuddered at the idea of once more exposing himself to the fascinations of the too-dangerous Louisa; but, unable immediately to devise any excuse, suffered himself to be led to join the party.

"*It has taken!*" said the Duke to himself, as he marked Las Sierras, with an unconsciously lover-like air, eagerly assume a place by the side of Louisa— "ah, Don Juan! incorruptible patriot! renowned general! the days are already numbered that shall intervene before our united names are pronounced with applause or execration together!"

The conversation of these thus strangely reunited lovers consisted chiefly of commonplaces, as if each had feared to

breathe

breathe a hint approaching near to the secret of their hearts; still the melancholy of Louisa (never dispersed since the death of her mother) was softened into a delicious sentiment by the proximity of her youthful hero, his brow graced with so many added laurels; and, partly to indulge her own inclinations—partly to discourage Villeneuve, she addressed almost the whole of her conversation to him. It consisted principally of inquiries respecting the names and characters of the different persons who met their view.

They had already taken several turns, when a buzz of respectful admiration announced the appearance of some extraordinary personage—a circle opened, and discovered a beautiful woman magnificently dressed, leaning on the arm of an elderly female. The grace of her form, the splendour of her habiliments, were singularly set off by several un-

usual

usual and brilliant military decorations. Louisa addressed Don Juan with her usual inquiries respecting the dazzling stranger.

He looked—he endeavoured to retain possession of himself, and to reply with that ready attention demanded by her rank.—" That," he said, with a voice of tolerable steadiness, " is the celebrated—Constantina—one of our heroines," he added, with a faint smile. But at that moment the dark eye of the maid of Ronda encountered *his*, and, overwhelmed with a contrariety of emotions, he was unable to preserve even the semblance of coolness.

Adorned with the insignia of triumph by the decrees of her grateful country, Constantina, who had long perceived the waning affection of Don Juan, on learning he was at Seville, had been tempted to make one last effort to regain his attention, and on her return, finding

finding herself the theme of every tongue, she resolved for once to avail herself of those distinctions in public, in the faint hope that they might be the means of reviving the extinguished admiration of the only man whose approbation was of value to her.

She met him indeed—but how did she meet him? Chained to the side of her rival—unable, though desirous, to quit her—and exhibiting in all his air and countenance those too certain indications of a devotion with the nature of which Constantina's heart was itself too well acquainted. How willingly would she have exchanged all the intoxicating distinctions with which she was adorned, for the soft and feminine graces that had subdued Las Sierras's heart! But (a heroine in every thing) neither her thoughts nor emotions were visible, and, to save Don Juan from the pain of conscious unkindness, she retreated from

 the

the walk, accompanied by the blessings and admiring exclamations of assembled multitudes.

Meanwhile the Count de Villeneuve, who always contrived to keep near them, had taken up the discourse Las Sierras found it impossible to continue—" That lady," he said, with a look of the most determined malice, " whose success is so decided, and who is more worthy of being born in the country of Joan of Arc than in this degenerate land, compels, indeed, even the praise of enemies.—Surely, General Las Sierras, you will not leave to a Frenchman to do justice to the merit of a heroine, whose hand, if report errs not, is shortly to be yours!"

Don Juan was unable to answer—even to attend to this address—he was wholly taken up with Louisa.

From his manner she had immediately fancied she beheld her rival in the

fair

fair Constantina; yet still this confirmation overwhelmed her. Unused to restrain her feelings, the effect it produced was visible.—"Let us leave this place," she said; and, seized with a momentary giddiness, leant her head on the shoulder of Las Sierras, who, with a truly delicate tenderness, was only anxious that her emotion should pass unobserved.

Poor Constantina! How powerless were all her dazzling testimonials of merit, when weighed with the soft Louisa's silent tear!

The party left the Prado, but Don Juan could not flatter himself that the malice of Villeneuve would suffer this incident to be passed over in silence. He felt as if imperiously summoned by honour to heal the wound Louisa's delicacy must suffer, by laying himself and all his possessions at her feet. Alas! he was only summoned by inclination; for what had interfered to invalidate Con-

stantina's prior claim? He was now more than ever involved in a conflict between duty and love, and determined on not seeing Constantina till he had found some anchorage for his wavering mind.

But while thus tossed to and fro by the uncertainty of his resolution, Constantina had taken *hers* irrevocably, and it was announced to the distracted Las Sierras in the following manner.

CHAP-

CHAPTER V.



Long had I watch'd thy dark foreboding brow,
What time thy bosom scorn'd its dearest vow!
Sad, though I wept the friend, the lover changed,
Still thy cold look was scornful and estranged.

Love and Madness.

Constantina to Las Sierras.

"I promised myself I would write all that I could not tell, and yet, at the moment of performance, I shrink from the task. Why should I shrink from it? Have not all the sufferings I have incurred from the purest and most ill-fated passion given me a dear-

 bought

bought right to address you? We cannot command our affections—alas! if we could, would these tears blot my paper as I thus resign you, for ever, to another?

"Farewell, dear Las Sierras! by the time these lines (happier than the writer!) shall meet your eyes, she will be withdrawn to an impenetrable asylum, the obscurity of which it will be impossible for the strictest search to discover.

"Do not accuse yourself—rather accuse our wayward fate. Ill omens attended our engagement. Remember you not, Las Sierras, when first your lips pronounced the perjured vow, afterwards in vain repeated, as I bound round your arm the double pledge of loyalty, the ribbon of patriot red, my brother was sharpening a sword? Ah, little did I think, in that moment of deep-felt happiness, it was the emblem of the

the sharper sword that, since that period, has pierced my heart! Let it not also be the emblem of division between ye! Let not the sacred flame of patriotism wax dim along with your love for her who first enkindled it! Beware of the traitor D'Almarez. He would lure you to the edge of a precipice covered with flowers, and, if you ventured, abandon you to your fate.

"Ere I bid adieu for ever, receive this assurance, my dear Las Sierras. Yes, let me this once call you my dear Las Sierras. Even the happy Donna Louisa might permit it—alas! she knows it is the common courtesy of words, and how far—how very far remote it is from your being really mine. You need fear nothing from my brother's resentment; I will assure him that it is *I* who, upon the maturest deliberation, have rejected vows your noble nature would still have urged you to confirm.

"Is it not so, Las Sierras? My pride takes refuge in the thought—it is *I* who have rejected you; yet at the same time my wishes for your happiness are far livelier than my pride. But think not I repent—No! for you will not let me have done all this in vain—you will yet be happy, Las Sierras, and then the sole wish of my existence will be satisfied."

Though the letter thus cut the knot of the perplexities that had so greatly distracted him, it was far from affording consolation to the heart of Don Juan de las Sierras.

Independent of a painful consciousness that the wrongs of Constantina would never suffer him to enjoy unmingled happiness, he knew not what step it would be most advisable next to take,

and

and stood gazing on the ring which she, for the second and last time, restored to him, in an agony of doubt and irresolution.

He experienced the most painful anxiety respecting Constantina's future fate —an anxiety scarcely to be conquered by the inference to be drawn from her letter, that she had retired to some safe, though obscure abode. He judged rightly in supposing he had for ever darkened the once brilliant prospects of Constantina.

In looking up to fame as a reward independent of the approbation of him who was the inspirer of all her thoughts and actions, she had aimed at an elevation beyond the attainment of her sex; and in this incapacity of generalizing her ideas—this subserviency of intellect to feeling, the heroine disappeared, and she re-entered into the usual order appointed for feminine existence. The

name of Constantina resounded from one end of Spain to the other. Its owner alone was listless, heedless, and indifferent to the universal enthusiasm she inspired. The passions of love and glory were born together in her soul, and together they were destined to be extinguished for ever.

Las Sierras no longer loved Constantina—two passions could not at the same time be the inmates of his breast. But, with his love, he had not lost his sense of honour, nor the generous, the admiring pity he felt for her self-sacrifice. He was conscious, too, how inimical any views upon the daughter of Almarez were to his character of a Spanish patriot; and thus determined, resolved to lose not a moment in the pursuit and recovery of his betrothed wife. A secret impression that she had probably taken refuge in the wilds of the Serrania, impelled him first to seek her there.

Still

Still he must bid one last short adieu to Louisa. However dangerous the interview, he determined to brave it.

He hastened to the residence of the Duke of Almarez, and inquired for Louisa. A new disappointment, perhaps a fortunate one, awaited him. The family of the Duke of Almarez had left Seville two hours before!

With no longer any pretext to detain him, behold our faithless, faithful lover, on his way! He tried to banish from his mind every thought but of Constantina; and in the idea of his early attachment to her, of the charms by which it was justified, and that he was now acting according to the dictates of honour, tried to look forward to future days of satisfaction, if not of felicity. He arrived without accident in the Serrania.

It was night when he took his course towards the little hamlet of Montejaque. Don Juan was well armed and mount-

ed, and always, when on these expeditions, carried a pair of pistols in his girdle; for, notwithstanding the attachment of his mountaineers, instances of their cruelty and ferocity were so frequent, that he would have deemed himself a madman to trust himself without such precautions among them.

As he now passed along some deeply hollowed caves of the mountains, he thought he heard noises that indicated persons suffering and struggling within, and stopped his horse to see if he could be of any assistance.

The cave was stopped up by stones and brushwood. When he had removed this obstacle, and advanced into the interior, he perceived some of the Serranos were at their old occupation, disarming two defenceless travellers. As usual, the unexpected appearance of a guerilla General created a momentary pause of consternation, of which Don Juan

Juan took advantage to reconnoitre the place and persons of the sufferers.

By the light of a rusty lamp, which had once been an object of depredation, and which now revealed their violence, he beheld a lady and cavalier, both bound and surrounded by ruffians. He advanced to take a nearer view of them. The gentleman, who seemed past middle age, still continued with his face turned from Don Juan, listening with dignified calmness to a volley of taunts and reproaches; but the young lady gazed on him, and instantly exclaimed with a joyful shriek—"Oh my dearest father! surely Heaven has heard our prayers—here comes our guardian angel, Don Juan de las Sierras."

The heart of Las Sierras throbbed in delighted surprise to this appeal, for she who made it was no other than Donna Louisa d'Almarez.

He could not deny to himself that

the

the most singular fatality seemed to pursue him—a fate which decreed that his path should be eternally crossed by the radiant being he adored, at the moment that his mind was bent on the fulfilment of his long registered vows to her he once had loved. Nothing was now to be thought of but the Duke's release and that of Donna Louisa.

" Not for you, General Las Sierras," said one of the Serranos, who appeared to have established a separate command in the very heart of Gonsalez's influence —" not even for you can we release this man of blood, till he has given us security for the alteration of his conduct. He knows, though he cares not to say so, base plunder is not our object—he knows it is not for that, we lay in wait —surprised and overpowered him while we suffered his domestics to escape, in their way to the Castle of Almarez."

The Duke, who had listened with a smile

smile of almost humorous disdain to the expression, "man of blood" from the bloody mountaineer, now said, in his peculiar and inimitable tone of biting irony—"What is it you would have, my worthy friends? For a considerable time I have listened, under a constraint not the most agreeable, to portraits of myself far from flattering, drawn by your discriminating hands. I have replied, but you would not hear me—I have denied——"

"Can you deny," resumed one of the fierce Serranos, "that you have been Andalusia's bitterest enemy—that you abandoned your country to war, ruin, and plunder—that, to your accursed counsels it is owing that foreign mercenaries now overrun our plains—that to you we owe the destruction of our home and families—that when the Junta, apprized of your baseness, sent deputies to offer you pardon or punishment, according

ing as you abjured or persevered in your intentions, you, with unparalleled dissimulation, professed yourself your country's friend, and then hastened to join her sworn destroyers? What madness tempted you, miserable man! after so many unrepented crimes, to revisit the very scene of their perpetration? But it has delivered you into our hands, and we shall at length have vengeance!"

"My good friends," resumed the Duke, in the same tone of feigned humility and real contempt, "all men are liable to err—I may have mistaken the best means of serving my country, as you now assuredly mistake that of pleasing the lord of Almarez, if you imagine these bonds agreeable to my hands; but Don Juan de las Sierras is a witness that the illusive views which led me to join the strangers are dispelled; and that, broken by years, misfortunes, and ill health, an old man was retiring to spend his

his latter days in peace at his paternal home, when your senseless vengeance interrupted him, and threatened the life that he holds far dearer than his own."

Some of the Serranos now retired to a corner of the cavern, as if to consult together. At length, one of them approached the Duke of Almarez—"You say, my Lord, that we are no longer to consider you as the enemy of Spain—what proof are you ready to give of your change of principles?"

"Any!" replied the Duke d'Almarez eagerly.

The rude commander now looked again significantly at his mountain band—then at Louisa. Her colour went and came, with painful emotion. At length, he said to the Duke—"Will you consent to unite your fair daughter to the patriot General Las Sierras?"

All the colour that had glowed in Louisa's cheeks was transferred to Don Juan

Juan at this strange—this, by him, most unexpected proposition. In spite of himself, his heart throbbed tumultuously, yet deliciously, at the ideas it suggested; but, going up to the Duke he eagerly whispered—"Appear to yield to their wild will, my Lord, and trust to my honour never to enforce the presumptuous claim."

Louisa overheard, and cast a reproachful glance at him, while the Duke, convinced Las Sierras was best acquainted with the violence and pertinacity of his mountaineers, unhesitatingly followed his advice, and agreed to give the proof of fidelity required.

"That is not enough," exclaimed the leader of the mountaineers; "ignorant and rude as you suppose us, we are not so unacquainted with the modes of keeping faith at the Castle of Almarez, as to take your unconfirmed word. Swear on the hilt of this sword, already dipped

in

in the blood of the enemy, that no reservation lurks beneath this apparent consent. And you, young and united lovers, approach; and, taking the same oath, vow that your attachment to each other and to your country will only expire together."

Don Juan de las Sierras had resisted admitting any reality in this strange scene as long as it was possible; but when he saw Louisa approach her lovely lips to the weapon of blood, and, without apparent fear, without repugnance, pronounce the engagement in which so much was included, his resolute self-denial began to forsake him—his reason to totter—and he could not repel an impression that the vow he now pronounced could never be retracted.

It is past! and thus in the cave of a robber—ratified by the most horrid and most revolting of ceremonies, is that engagement taken which, whether broken

or

or fulfilled, will decide the fate of these two beings to all eternity.

But what were Don Juan's emotions when, looking at the lovely Louisa, he met her upward glance, beaming with such a serene consciousness of perfect happiness, that the soft sigh which accompanied it seemed to say—" How often, under the gilded roofs of a palace, has my heart been desolate, when here, in nature's wildest recesses, my soul first tastes the delicious draught of real felicity!"

The thoughts of the Duke were not so transporting. In all his political speculations he had intended Louisa as the lure that should lead the guerilla chief, by a graduated succession of false hopes, to the side he himself had adopted; but never that so rich a reward should crown the anticipated apostacy.

For the present, it was however a satisfaction to be secured from the apprehension

hension of injury and violence; and, justly sensible of this, he suffered Don Juan to attend him and his daughter beyond the precincts of the mountains to the Castle of Almarez.

Early the next morning, Louisa was in the Duke's chamber, urged by her dutiful attention, to hope the alarms of the preceding night had not done him any injury. The Duke had perfectly recovered his spirits—treated the whole as a jest—and said he trusted those occurrences weighed no more on her mind than they did on his.

"The danger is certainly past," Louisa replied, "but not so the obligation."

"How? what mean you?" asked d'Almarez, much disturbed.

Thus questioned, Donna Louisa felt the courage fail her with which she had, at first, attempted to explain herself; but (Nature suggesting the surest medium through which to reach the feel-

ings

ings of her parent) she threw herself at his feet, and said—"The vow by which, oh my father! I am bound to consider myself, henceforth, as the wife of Las Sierras."

"What madness is this?" said the Duke, angrily pacing the room. "'Tis true, I bade you try your feeble powers to conquer the absurd fanaticism of Las Sierras, but never, never, thought of bestowing my daughter as the reward."

He paused. Louisa resumed, in a persuasive tone—"You bade me try to win him to our side—instructed me in the modes of a world which—would I had never known! Taught me how to feign an interest in his fate. Forgive me, dearest father—if all you would have had me *feign*—I *feel!*"

Amazed at the boldness which had supported her thus far, Louisa paused, and concealed her lovely face in both her hands, while she awaited her father's decision.

decision. For herself, nothing could alter her opinion of Las Sierras. The high rank he bore in the patriot army, and the distinction with which she had always heard him mentioned, particularly since her arrival in the country which was the theatre of his exploits, had impressed a character of respect upon her love, which added to the profound nature of her attachment. Even her ambition was satisfied, and, so far from thinking the sacrifice she made derogatory, no destiny appeared to her so glorious as that of holding the hero of Andalusia in her chains.

"Consider his conduct," she resumed, "since he first became acquainted with me—his delicate attention—his scrupulous honour—the sacrifices he made to convey me in safety, oh my father, to your arms! If you can forget all this, *I* never can—and if——"

"You talk like a child," again interrupted

rupted the Duke—"you are promised to Villeneuve."

"To that ruffian!" shrieked Louisa. "Oh no! dear father," she continued, clinging round his neck, "you say so but to terrify me. Deny it, oh deny it—you suffered him to seek me—but you could never have promised the misery of your child. Yet," she continued after a pause, "hear me—I was to blame—I will resign all idea of Las Sierras, if you will but consent the other hated lover shall be banished from my sight—I will live to devote myself to you alone. Will that expiate my folly, dearest father?"

As she spoke, she looked up at him, her eyes all bathed in tears. She was one of those few beauties who can indulge in them without disadvantage, and at this instant looked so consummately lovely, that it recalled to the memory of the guilty but unfortunate d'Almarez

d'Almarez ideas it was the most necessary for his peace of mind to banish.

Nature had endowed Louisa's voice and eyes with all those bewitching powers of persuasion in which he had trusted —from which he had suffered so much. The resemblance was so striking, as to create a temporary delusion in the already troubled mind of the Duke. He seemed to hear a wife again—a wife devoted to him as in her days of innocence and truth; his heart was touched and melted. In a voice subdued between tenderness and agony, he exclaimed— "Elvira, you have conquered—Elvira! distraction! Cannot my daughter smile, but with Elvira's lips—weep, but with her enchanting, her deceiving eyes?— Louisa, may you make a better wife to Las Sierras than——But," resumed the Duke, interrupting the half-formed phrase, "what if Las Sierras himself should consider this vain engagement as void?"

 "Rejected!"

"Rejected!" cried Louisa, blushing even still more than in the preceding part of the conversation—"then—then I were lost indeed!"

Though the Duke threw out this idea in the bare hope that it might shake the resolution of his daughter, he had not a doubt but that, as all circumstances conspired to press this happiness on Las Sierras, he would accept it with transport. His only solicitude now, therefore, was how to turn these untoward occurrences to his own best advantage.

"Strange!" exclaimed d'Almarez, as he paced the hall in silent but wondering review of the guilty past—"a patriot, and a Sylveira! Nothing but fatality could bring about such an union; and to fatality, like my glorious, my imperial model, I must bow."

While Louisa was counting the minutes that should bring Las Sierras to her feet, *he* was employed in the indefatigable

fatigable but fruitless search of the lost Constantina. At length, duty and inclination whispered alike that he should inquire after the welfare of the beauteous Louisa; and here the delightful, the overwhelming news awaited him, that the Duke of Almarez was determined, for once, to abide by an engagement! What should he do? Not only his own, but Louisa's happiness was evidently at stake. He had surely sacrificed enough to duty — Constantina had, probably, taken precautions to elude him. If in the mental council that he held, inclination rather outweighed the claims of plighted faith, it is but justice to observe the victim was not conscious of being so far influenced by its insidious power.

After a brief discussion, the hand of the Buonapartist Grandee was, at length, clasped in the bond of alliance with that of the patriot chief; and as the Duke

had lost all relish for the seclusion of the Castle of Almarez, it was agreed that he should bestow his daughter upon General Las Sierras in the country-house he possessed in the environs of Madrid.

In endowing her with all the possessions he derived from the lavish bounty of old Sylveira, Don Juan made but one condition with the father of his promised bride—that he should never, in the council or the field, be required to act contrary to the character which he was determined to support to his latest breath—that of a Spanish patriot.

To this the Duke unhesitatingly acceded; and, "hushed in grim repose," determined patiently to await the favourable moment in which this sacrifice to love would be followed up by the sacrifice of his country.

Las Sierras himself, when he looked back at the series of events which had

led

led to such unexpected felicity, could scarcely believe he was not bewildered in the mazes of a dream; and, notwithstanding the precautions he had taken to render his happiness at once stable and virtuous, could not forbear thinking that the uncertainty too of a dream appeared annexed to it.

In this state of mind he joined the Duke of Almarez in his house near Madrid, where the sight of Louisa—the discussion of their mutual plans—and the brilliant character of their future hopes—restored his mind to the buoyant tone of rapture and felicity.

At length her lovely lips pronounced the day that was to unite her fate for ever to that of Las Sierras, and Don Juan was wandering in the environs of her residence in that delightful disquietude of mind that permitted not the idea of repose, when a note was put into his hands by a masked and disguised

 personage,

personage, who, the moment he had executed his commission, precipitately fled.

Struck by the singularity of his manner, the spirits of Las Sierras were not more composed by what follows:

"The hour of grace is nearly past—that of a terrible reckoning is at hand. False to your love, you associate openly with your country's bitterest enemies, and, to crown the whole, espouse the daughter of her deadliest foe. Repent in time. Think you, because the heart of Constantina shrunk from vengeance, that while her sworn protector lived, her wrongs could sleep? The blow that annihilates you will fall like lightning, but it will not be less sure. *If you dare to conclude that unhallowed union, know, to a certainty, we meet again.*

"Trust

"Trust not in friends or influence—*your* name is great, but *mine* is all-powerful in Andalusia. At a breath I can summon a thousand voices to condemn you. Nor trust to former friendship, Las Sierras—you thought you knew me, but *you knew not all. More* might have marred the plans that required you should be *wholly mine.* Acting under a thousand forms, but still actuated by the same principle, read here and tremble, while you learn that HE whom you knew under the name of Juan Gonsalez, is the avenger whose fiat never went forth in vain,

"JUAN EL EMPECINADO."

It was then discovered! the secret that Las Sierras had more than once suspected. The inflexible Don Juan Gonsalez, and the terrible Don Juan el

Empecinado, with whose exploits all Spain resounded, were one and the same person. The letter also rent the veil of self-deception with which he had successfully covered his actions, and he felt he had been too hasty in renouncing Constantina. But it was now too late to recede, and if it had not been so, his spirit revolted at the idea that the Empecinado might suppose he had obtained those concessions from terror, which Constantina could not obtain from love.

The recollection of this unhappy maiden, whose fate he longed to learn, did not fail, however, to infuse a degree of bitterness into his meditations, till chased away by the far more beauteous form of Louisa, before whose image every ungentle thought subsided. He tried to look upon the letter as an empty threat—perhaps a forgery—invented by malice to separate him for ever from Gonsalez. At all events, as no more than

than a day now intervened before he was to be united to Louisa, Don Juan de las Sierras determined to defer, till after the celebration of his nuptials, the demand of any explanation from the noble spirited though vindictive EMPECINADO.

CHAPTER VI.

Il faut des torrens de sang pour effacer nos fautes aux yeux des hommes; une seule larme suffit à Dieu.

CHATEAUBRIAND.

THE day arrived that was to unite Las Sierras to Louisa, and he tried to efface from his mind the vindictive prophecy of the Empecinado.

On the morning of his nuptials, however, it returned with redoubled force, and a melancholy overclouded his spirits, which he found it vain to combat or reason away.—"Oh, miserable state of humanity!" he secretly murmured; "assuredly we are not designed for happiness,

ness, or who so blest as I? The hand of the most beautiful woman in Spain awaits my acceptance—of her whom I have loved to madness in spite of every obstacle—in spite of duty——"

Duty! ah! that was the word, that with its single force opposed itself between him and happiness, and whispered to conscience to allow him no repose. But self-love would not allow him to admit this as the sole reason for his sadness, and he still vainly sought for some extraneous cause that might account for the insuperable weight that hung upon his spirits on a day like this.

"I am guilty of unthankfulness," he said; "all the materials of happiness court my acceptance, yet I am not happy—I am miserable! Surely it is the hand of God that is on me—oh, mighty Power! do not still turn thy face from me; let but this cloud pass over—'a wounded spirit who can bear!'"

He remained a few moments plunged in meditation—an aspiration passed his lips for the preservation and welfare of Louisa.

Seeking in a casket for a jewel to present his bride, the letter met his eye that he thought he had destroyed, and these words pressed upon his view, as if inscribed in letters of fire—"*If you dare to conclude that unhallowed union, know, to a certainty, we meet again!*"

He felt a sickly throb of heart. Fears for Louisa's safety excited in his bosom a degree of apprehension, that on his own account he would have disdained to admit. Their union was yet unaccomplished—it might be deferred—but, no, he had gone too far to recede, if indeed he wished it. He did not wish it—the idea of Louisa, beaming in all her native loveliness, recurred with triumphant force to his imagination, and, at length, effectually dissipated the dark phantoms conjured there.

The

The Duke of Almarez had wished that a marriage which would still further injure his already declining credit at court, might be celebrated with as much privacy as possible. Accordingly, the greater part of his train had been sent on to his palace at Madrid, whither he himself purposed soon removing, and Don Juan received the hand of Donna Louisa in the presence only of her father, Donna Rosaura, Margarita d'Aguilar, and one or two domestics.

" And now had the marriage been blessed by the priest," and the party, actuated by so many and such various different emotions, were assembled in a saloon of the villa to partake of some refreshment.

As it is sometimes the case on days selected from all others for the celebration of happiness, there had seldom reigned a greater proportion of painful feeling

feeling among a group composed of so small a number of individuals.

Disappointed in his ambitious views for his daughter, the Duke was cold, gloomy, and thoughtful. Agitated from the preceding scene, by emotions and recollections almost too painful for endurance, Donna Rosaura could with difficulty repress the tears that were every moment ready to burst unbidden from her eyes. Louisa, alarmed and timid, easily caught the infection; while Don Juan, after the first flush of tender triumph was passed, remained in a musing attitude, with his eyes bent to the ground, under the influence of a return of that ominous dejection, as often the forerunner as the consequence of calamity.

On the Duke's at length noticing it, Don Juan attempted an incoherent apology—hastily swallowed some draughts of wine to the health of his lovely bride

—and

—and then, meeting the eyes of Louisa, drew from them the sweetest consolation to his pained and wounded spirit. —" Yes," he secretly repeated, while their looks conversed together in this secret and unutterable communion, " at least, come what may, I shall not suffer unregarded—*you* will participate in my sorrows, my Louisa, my only beloved, my wife!"

At this moment the attention of the domestic group was aroused by three knocks, heard distinctly in the apartment where they sat.

Don Juan started; and, as if answering to a well-known summons, was the first to notice that the knocks were not replied to. There being only one or two young domestics in the way, the alarm was obliged to be repeated.

A bustle in the entrance-hall ensued, and the terrified females thought they distin-

distinguished voices within, disputing the admission of the strangers. They now heard a violent rush past the servants in waiting. The door of the saloon was rudely thrown open, and a band of men, masked and armed, surrounded Don Juan de las Sierras.

The whole was done with the rapidity of lightning, and the superiority in numbers of the assailants precluded effectual resistance. The Duke had, however, impulsively put his hand to his sword; and, bitterly deprecating his own ill-advised caution in sending away his servants, called on the only domestics he had left, to hasten to Don Juan's rescue. But their spirit seemed paralyzed by the words with which the masks addressed them.

"Stir not!" said the commander of the band. "The first that unsheathes his weapon dies! Otherwise, ye are safe as at the foot of the altar—for our business

ness is solely with the arch-traitor Las Sierras!"

The villa was now a scene of anguish and confusion. Weeping, shrieking as she threw herself in Donna Rosaura's arms, still Donna Louisa could not help observing the singular manner of the once dauntless Las Sierras. As if oppressed with the consciousness of being at the disposal of an overruling power, he surrendered himself, without a struggle, into the hands of his assailants. His countenance was already overspread with the paleness of death; but *one* look, that, as they hurried him from the chamber, he darted at Louisa, told her, that, in this wreck of all other feeling, his unextinguishable, his now despairing love survived, ardent, intense, devoted as ever!

What a revolution had a few moments effected in the party! Uncertain what measures to take, the Duke now walked with

with hurried steps up and down the deserted saloon—now gave orders, which he as immediately contradicted, for an instant removal to Madrid. At one moment reviled his domestics for their cowardice in refusing to pursue the assailants—at the next secretly acknowledged that his own blood ran chill at the idea of the influence by which this wide-extending misery was effected—for he felt assured it could be in no other name but *his*, whose ferocious and sanguinary deeds were the theme of every tongue—the accursed EMPECINADO.

Meanwhile, the pitiable situation of Donna Louisa awakened Rosaura's most tender cares. As yet unhabituated to calamity, she sunk unresisting beneath this tremendous stroke. Tears and fainting fits succeeded each other through the day and night, while in the intervals between wild anguish and total insensibility, she vainly conjured Rosaura to suggest

suggest some topic of consolation. As unacquainted as herself with the connecting links that led to this dreadful catastrophe (for Don Juan had concealed from them the letter he received, and the identity of his colleague Gonsalez with El Empecinado), her grief was heightened by the most painful and distracting surprise, and there was not an idea presented itself that afforded to their minds the most remote hope of relief from their present state of agony.

While such was the situation of his distracted bride, Don Juan, bound and secured by his ferocious escort, was conveyed with a rapidity that defied calculation to Cadiz. There, having performed their part of the task, they left him, and he was transferred to the hands of others equally pitiless, by whom he was conveyed to the place of his ultimate destination.

Though this was, as he expected, a prison,

prison, no respect was omitted due to the rank and consideration lately enjoyed by Don Juan. The apartment in which he was lodged was commodious, and the guard placed over him, in every thing except replying to his inquiries, ready to attend to his commands.

But few were the inquiries Don Juan had need to make to guess *who* had effected his ruin. In what had passed he at once discerned the hand of El Empecinado, or rather, to his diseased imagination, the finger of Providence intent on punishing him for a real, by the imputation of an imaginary crime.

He felt assured that El Empecinado believed his union with Donna Louisa d'Almarez included a secession from the patriot cause, and that it was *for this latter offence* he was destined to suffer. If he could obtain an interview with him, it would be easy to dissipate this illusion; but that was not probable, and he

he spent the whole of this, and the ensuing day, in a state of suspense that forbade the thoughts of repose. All his guards would inform him was, that El Empecinado was absent upon unavoidable business, and that, though the arrest was made by his order, and in his name, till he returned to Cadiz nothing could be decided.

Don Juan de las Sierras had, then, with the permission of his tyrant colleague, probably four or five days to live. Before the trial of its bitterness, he would have thought this a situation of restless agony. As it was, exhausted nature towards the end of the second day, sought oblivion in a temporary repose, and he sunk upon his hard bed, where love favoured him with Elysian dreams, in which he lived over the last hours of his life with Louisa.

Awaking in the dead of night, he thought he discerned a figure, fixed and im-

immoveable, seated on the foot of his pallet. He gazed on it intently to assure himself it was no delusion of the imagination, and discerned that it was indeed a real person in the habit of a priest.

His fancy still raised by the delirium of suffering and grief, he immediately converted him (however improbable the supposition) into the one who had blessed his marriage with Louisa.—"What wilt thou with me?" he wildly exclaimed; "thou who hast witnessed my hour of brief delight—art thou come now to preside at my destruction? Come on, if thou hast aught to say or offer—add not suspense to my other intolerable sufferings!"

Bending over a crucifix, the figure still preserved the same ominous silence. His face was entirely concealed by the same dark drapery that shrouded his figure, and that left it uncertain to what

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ecclesiastical denomination he belonged.

In vain Don Juan endeavoured to rouse him from silence. At length he rose and advanced towards him.

The stranger sighed profoundly, and with his hand gently averting his approach.—" Thou art not to be overcome by terror," he said; " dismiss it—you see a living man, and one who—if you permit it—wishes to be your friend."

" *Who* wishes to be the friend of the wretched?" replied the desperate Las Sierras; " surrounded, overpowered, betrayed, to whom am I to look for deliverance?"

" To one," replied the stranger, " who has witnessed thy youthful valour—directed thy early ambition—and still would rejoice to see it leading thee in glory's path, instead of conducting thee to an early tomb."

" You speak in riddles," resumed Las Sierras. " The victim of my former friends

friends—abandoned by my new connexions, I know not the being who would feel the sentiments you express for me."

"Believe them yet," resumed the stranger with energy—"There is not a pang can rend your heart or frame, oh, Las Sierras, that will not be felt by mine!"

"Disclose yourself then," Don Juan eagerly replied, for as yet his unknown visitor, though expressing himself with a considerable degree of earnestness and feeling, had not only kept his face concealed, but spoke in a voice evidently disguised.

"I can comply with your wish," replied the unknown, "without the disclosure of my features. Surely his undeserved sufferings and enforced absence cannot have effaced from the memory of Don Juan de las Sierras, Cura the Valencian, better known by the name

of

of El Sombrero, and acknowledged as the leader of the mountain bands before Gonsalez appeared to usurp the place of others, and sacrifice them to his envy!"

Till this moment we know not what might have been Don Juan's conjectures respecting the mysterious stranger. Whatever they were, his discovery produced a feeling nearly resembling disappointment. Of this self-created chief he neither had heard, nor wished to hear any thing, since his disappearance from the mountains, where it was the general belief that he had absconded with the accumulated treasure he had collected.

"Long have I been," resumed El Sombrero, "the unwilling inhabitant of these walls—the place in which, sooner or later, all the friends of Gonsalez are doomed to meet. At length I have discovered the means of escape—but, before we converse farther on the subject, I think it is but just, Senhor, to treat

you with a confidence I have not yet bestowed on living man. Though we have met on affairs of public interest, I believe I may truly assert that you have never yet perfectly seen my face. It became latterly the general persuasion in the mountains, that the aspect I so carefully concealed must be calculated to shock and terrify the beholder. Las Sierras, ere I remove the intrusive shade, do you think you can endure to gaze upon the countenance from the apprehension of which even the fierce Serranos shrunk in awe?"

"Pshaw!" cried Don Juan, rendered peevish by the irritation of protracted suffering—"after what I have lost and what I am doomed to endure, think you a set of features can shake my mind? Advance, grim illusion! or whatsoe'er thou art—I have spent a night and day in the near contemplation of death, and can I fear to look on *thee!*"

"You

"You have chosen," muttered El Sombrero, "therefore reproach me not;" and throwing back his cloak——

—— —— —— ——

The countenance discovered to Las Sierras's startled view might rather be termed a forbidding, than a horrible one —it was that of a man younger than he had supposed the Valencian to be, and seemed formed by nature to express the obliquity of his mind. One eye was full and dark, and was fixed in earnest scrutiny upon his intended victim; the other, much smaller and of a light blue*, rolled independent of his will around the narrow apartment. All his features were slightly distorted, and his countenance

* This discrepancy in the organs of vision, though a most unusual, is by no means an unprecedented thing. Every reader of history remembers the emperor whose eyes, of different colours, were thought emblematical of his apostacy from one religion to another.

countenance was strongly indicative of ferocity and cunning.

Having at length disclosed himself, the Valencian thus addressed Don Juan de las Sierras — " Obliged, in consequence of an affair of honour, to fly my country, and take refuge among the mountains of Ronda, I contrived, for above twenty years, to convert my exile into a species of sovereignty.

" I was then young—my features such as you see. I knew enough of the vulgar portion of mankind to be aware how much they are influenced by outward appearance, and how little such an appearance as mine was calculated to obtain authority or respect. I assumed the tone of age and experience—concealed my features from the public view—shrouded myself in mystery—gave out that my birth was illustrious—and, by these different pretences, the fallacy of which the ignorance of my dupes prevented

prevented them from discovering, obtained unbounded influence.

"Gonsalez came—and, uniting himself with you, threatened in a moment to overturn an authority, so long established. Despairing to oppose effectual resistance to your joint influence, I tried the experiment of disuniting you. You remember, no doubt, Senhor, the day of my unexpected appearance, when I sat an uninvited guest among the visitors assembled at the Castle of Almarez. My knowledge of Gonsalez's real character—a knowledge denied to you—enabled me safely to hazard the prediction which has since so portentously been fulfilled—but I looked not to being myself marked down as one object for his implacable resentment.

"I failed in my intentions—beheld you and Don Juan Gonsalez constituted by authority joint commanders of the forces in the Serrania de Ronda—I gradually dwindled into insignificance.

Still I might do my mountain friends some service. I hesitated not—after collecting the money necessary for the purpose, their once favoured chief departed in the humble character of provider of military stores. I was attacked and intercepted by the fierce Gonsalez —accused—basely accused, of intending to turn to my own use their painfully raised contributions—thrown, without a hearing, into a dungeon, while he has, no doubt, spread the report among my adherents that I am no more."

In this account there was much that tallied with Don Juan's own observation, yet still his mind refused to give implicit credence to the Valencian's assertions of his own innocence, and he remained buried in silent thought while the tempter resumed—" Fellow sufferers from Gonsalez, let us unite in defeating his cruelty. The minions of his vengeance only wait his return to Cadiz to terminate your existence—probably

Cura,

Cura, too, will be thought worthy to be brought out to add to the splendour of the spectacle at this patriotic auto da fé. Let us disappoint their expectation. Gonsalez's conduct has disgusted me with patriotism—the most sanguinary and ferocious of men can be patriots in his sense of the word—let us rather be distinguished as the friends of order.

"Ask not by what means I have entered your prison to make you this proposal, or have obtained this hâbit, that is a passport from the dungeon to the palace—the same will enable us to break through our prison gates, and wing our triumphant flight as far as Ronda. There, let us raise the standard; and, uniting ourselves with the enlightened foreigners, who, like the Romans, civilize where they impose their easy yoke—join together in one common interest, and find ourselves alike by the force of reason and of numbers invincible!"

Don Juan started from his recumbent

posture, and, for the first time recovering all his scattered energy, exclaimed —"Never! I disdain life and safety when proffered on such terms—Gonsalez will assuredly not condemn without a hearing his brother in arms—the companion of his fame; yet, if it be possible he should do so, sooner—much sooner may I die the death of guilt with the consciousness of innocence, than save myself by the forfeiture of it! No—come what will, I will die as I have lived, a sincere if erring patriot!"

The Valencian paused—then, as if mastering some rising emotion, calmly said—"Those words sound well, Senhor, nor did I expect immediate compliance; yet think a moment," he added, in a more persuasive tone—"the means of life and liberty lie before you, and if you depend on Gonsalez's mercy, you are miserably deceived. This night is to give me freedom—a freedom which you cannot prevent me from obtaining,

but

but which I still desire to share with you."

He then entered into a detail of the means adopted for his escape, and again offered to make Don Juan the companion of it, stipulating, as the sole condition, that he should join him in the revolt against the patriots.

Don Juan spurned the offer.

"Then die a traitor's death!" exclaimed Cura with a diabolical smile, "without the poor consolation of receiving a traitor's guerdon!"

As he pronounced these words he rushed from the presence of his victim, like the tempter murmuring curses and execrations as he fled.

In the restless moments that succeeded, they seemed already to have begun to take effect. However he had seemed to disbelieve them, the Valencian's repeated assurances of Gonsalez's merciless intentions could not but in a degree influence his mind. A few days must decide the

 question—

question—must decide whether Gonsalez would admit his plea of innocence or not—must decide whether he was to expire on a scaffold or to enjoy a long futurity of bliss with Louisa. The interval was awful. Yet of *this* Don Juan felt assured—that he would rather be thus guiltless and a sufferer, than have the responsibility of El Empecinado.

Though inclined to hope a favourable termination to his imprisonment from the justice of Gonsalez, still it was the part of a Christian soldier to be prepared for the worst—and the hours thus allowed for self-recollection were not lost upon Don Juan de las Sierras.

In the rapid review he took of his short but eventful life, he could discern much of good performed—still more intended—and but one glaring blemish.

But *that one!*—it weighed down his heart, naturally the seat of every thing that was generous and noble; and when he thought of Gonsalez as the brother

of

of Constantina, he again despaired of pardon. When, on the contrary, taking his conduct in a more enlarged point of view, he asked himself, should a few days indeed close this eventful scene, what were his grounds of hope for happiness hereafter, he saw more to encourage blissful anticipations than dread; and, after sincerely bewailing those instances in which he had failed, experienced a consoling consciousness that he could cast himself with a modest confidence and hope on the forgiveness and ultimate favour of a merciful Redeemer.

After a night so spent, the ties of this world seemed already to have loosed their hold upon the altered Las Sierras. But there was one subject which, but to touch upon was agony. To part for ever from Louisa—and thus to part! The idea of her love—her grief—the different hopes with which he had received her hand—combined to distract

 him.

him. Religion itself was hardly of sufficient power to alleviate a pang like this—yet to endure the contemplation of this parting he now directed all the faculties of his soul.

While bending to Heaven for assistance he implored *that* aid without which his efforts must be vain, he sometimes thought resignation had obtained the mastery; and, strong in Heaven's assistance, he did not fear what man could do.. Then again, he felt how impossible it was, at once, to rend from his heart hopes and affections that had entwined themselves with his very existence. How these feelings alternately swayed him up to the awful moment of Gonsalez's final decision, will be best expressed in the following letter with which the cruel mercy of his tyrants permitted him to pierce Louisa's heart.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VII.

Ah! though young I fall, believe me
Death would never claim a sigh!
'Tis to lose thee—'tis to leave thee,
Makes me think it hard to die!

Spanish Ballad of the Battle of Roncevallos.

Las Sierras to Louisa.

"My fate is fixed—and, ere three days are past, your lover, your husband, will expiate on the scaffold the crime of loving you too well. That thus my career should close! and by the hand of him my heart selected for its dearest friend!—oh, Gonsalez! if *you* had erred, how different had been my conduct! I pause, and inquire of my astonished soul if I am waking—if it be indeed true that a few days can have

have effected such a revolution in my fate! And is it possible? Can the heart that now, even now, throbs so tumultuously as my pen traces my loved, lost Louisa's name, so soon become insensible to her image? With my whole being penetrated with love for you alone, is it possible sensations so ardent will in a moment be extinguished? Farewell, Louisa! oh, my only beloved—my promised bride! this, this indeed is the bitterness of death—Louisa! dear destroyer! on earth we meet no more—Destroyer did I write? Blot out the word, my pen! no, dear Louisa, my own passions were my destroyers—my own wild, wayward, ungovernable heart. I once had generous ambition, and thought to leave a name behind that posterity would not let die. I am punished where most I had treasured hope; but still feel undeserving of such severity.

"One word more, Louisa, and then for ever farewell. I have been tempted—strongly tempted to make a *real* sacrifice

of

of patriotism and honour—the baits held out to my acceptance were life, liberty, and you! But I resisted the fiend even unto extremity, and your lover, your husband, suffers, without deserving, a traitor's doom."

Speechless, overwhelmed, like the statue of despair, Louisa held this fatal letter in her hand; yet even when she seemed most insensible, her soul was visited by an acute pang, in thinking that every lazy minute, which only passed in sluggish horror to *her*, too surely advanced the period of her husband's doom. She refused herself to all comfort—gently but firmly repelled the officious efforts of her women—and the air of resigned despair, of meek desolation, that breathed in the whole person of this late triumphant, brilliant, lovely creature, painted far more forcibly than her first violent emotions the awful wreck that had swept away her happiness. Still she could not refuse some acknowledgment

ment to the unremitting cares of her aunt Rosaura; yet, though desirous to seem thankful, she could not forbear once, when the sainted lady urged her to seek composure in prayer, replying with the peevishness of grief—"You cannot, Donna Rosaura, you cannot guess my sufferings. Religion, that balm which is all powerful to your passionless heart, is, as yet, only heard, like a whisper in the midst of a whirlwind, by mine."

Rosaura looked steadfastly at her—"You think me ignorant of grief! unhappy being! might I hope it would but lighten the slightest part of thy too just sorrow, I would now, even now, heedless of aught that I might lose by it, lay open wounds that half a life have scarce sufficed to close, and challenge the palm of misery with you."

Louisa bowed her head, equally unable to oppose or to afford undivided attention to the disclosure; while Rosaura, whose aim was consolation, not selfish egotism,

gave

gave the following details of her eventful story:—

History of Donna Rosaura d'Almarez.

"The first fifteen years of my life were spent, my Louisa, as innocently, and more happily, than yours, and never did I know an hour's affliction till after my tender mother died. My father and brother then determined on removing from our country residence to the capital, and in the aversion and reluctance I felt to this change I might trace a *pressentiment* of the evils that were there to overwhelm me.

"These sentiments, however, were too violent to be permanent. With the natural versatility of my age, I soon yielded to the pleasure of exciting admiration, and if I never became vain or giddy, it was, alas! because my heart was still alive to deeper and more dangerous seductions.

"At a ball given by the court, my brother noticed to me, in terms of enthusiastic admi-

a decrepid old man, very richly dressed, endeavoured to insert his head between two of the surrounding cavaliers, who instantly made way for him. He addressed a few words to the Senhora, which seemed to be those of remonstrance. She replied with humility and modesty, but appeared to request some further delay. The old man withdrew to a short distance, but seemed determined not to lose sight of his admired charge, while my brother, who imagined he had now got a clue to her, observed—' We cannot be surprised, Senhora, however we may regret it, that your company must be ardently desired by the Senhor your father.'—' My husband, Senhor,' replied the young lady, with a deep blush, followed by a sigh.

" Don Juan d'Avellana had scarcely recovered from his surprise, when a beautiful youth, of about thirteen, was dispatched by the old gentleman to the lady. After whispering a few words in her ear, he took his station by the incognita, and be-

gan

gan chatting familiarly with her, at the same time that he blended in his manner a degree of tenderness and attention. A certain resemblance that prevailed in the features of this lovely pair convinced Don Juan d'Avellana that he could not be a second time mistaken; and determined not to lose sight of the young lady till he had gratified his curiosity, he again addressed his discourse to her, observing— 'Your brother, Senhora, enjoys a privilege that must be envied by the proudest cavalier.'—'My son, Senhor,' the lady replied with brevity; and not waiting for D'Avellana's gallant expressions of astonishment, gave her hand to the young man, who conducted her, in the midst of the murmurs of surrounding beaux, to her carriage.

"That this young and lovely creature should be the mother of a son of such an appearance, excited my brother's surprise still more than that she should be sacrificed as a wife to age and ugliness. That

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the sacrifice must have been made when she was scarcely emerged from childhood was all he could conclude, and this conviction increased the tender pity with which she inspired him. He learnt that the name of her husband was the Marquis of Marialva. Adelaide, Marchioness of Marialva, was the daughter of a South American Viceroy, and had spent all her early years in the climates of the sun; her father had married an Indian woman, of the blood of the Incas, which accounted for the dark foreign style of beauty she possessed. The Viceroy dying under the displeasure of his own government, to which severe accusations were preferred of peculation in his office, the greater part of his effects were confiscated, and Adelaide, cradled in pomp and luxury, found herself, at the age of twelve, a desolate orphan.

" Her beauty and sorrows attracted the attention of the Marquis of Marialva, her father's successor in his government, and she

she accepted his hand to escape from the horrors of poverty or a convent. She remained several years the ornament of his viceregal court, and on their return to Europe they had visited France and Italy previous to settling in Spain. Since that time he had buried her charms in the country. This was the first time the Marquis was ever persuaded to take a journey to Madrid. He found that Spanish jealousy was exploded, and that a fearful laxity of manners had succeeded in its place. Tremblingly alive to ridicule, he did the violence to himself of sometimes allowing the lovely Adelaide to appear in public, and receive the homage of the admiring cavaliers; but each time he suffered so severely, that it was confidently reported many days could not elapse before he hurried her back to his Castle of Rosignano; and it was at the same time said, that the Marquis made himself amends in private for the martyrdom his wife caused him in public to endure, and that Adelaide

laide (in other respects very harshly treated) was not allowed, in the interior of her household, even the consolation of a companion of her own sex.

"Such was the account that my brother, Don Juan d'Avellana, gave me, half gaily, half impressed with a melancholy he could not overcome, at the idea of the sufferings of a being in whom he already began to take a dangerous and too lively interest. He expressed the warmest desire that it might be in my power to relieve the unhappiness of this lovely creature, and proposed my immediately seeking her acquaintance, alleging that the name of our family stood so high for rank and merit, that the Marquis would not dare to repulse us with the coldness he shewed to all other visitors.

"Since the death of my mother, Don Juan d'Avellana's word was a law with my father and myself. We both sought the Marialvas; and such was the high esteem in which my father was held, that the

the Marquis of Marialva made a flattering exception in his favour; while Adelaide received my advances with still livelier demonstrations of pleasure, and obtained, through my influence, a prolonged permission to participate in the pleasures of the capital. The time of departure, however, at length necessarily arrived, and Adelaide beheld it with such an increase of reluctance and aversion, that she could only be reconciled to it by obtaining my father's hard-wrung consent that I should accompany her to the Castle of Rosignano, in the vicinity of Seville.

"Fatal consent! while as yet the true character of the Marchioness was unknown to him! it removed me from a circle of giddy adorers, to be exposed to the more dangerous examples and advice of one of the most fascinating of my own sex. During my stay at Rosignano, *the harm that Adelaide did to my mind* (I cannot avail myself of any other expression) is incalculable. A practised coquette, she delighted

in forming pupils, and if I was not completely perverted, it was only because Heaven had endowed me with a fund of tenderness of heart and integrity of principle, that marked me, from my birth, rather for the victim than the injurer.

"I was not able immediately to comprehend the cause of Adelaide's dislike of the Castle of Rosignano. Every part of the establishment bore the impress of magnificence and good taste, and exhibited a certain mixture of foreign luxury and the forms peculiar to our own country, pleasing to my youthful imagination.

"The first check I received to my pleasure was an intimation from Adelaide that at once unveiled the tyrannical disposition of the Marquis. I had been admiring, from my chamber window, the magnificent chesnut woods, and all the different features of the glorious prospect that seemed to invite the most inattentive observer to adore the liberality of nature; and I expressed a wish to my friend, that part of

of the morning might be devoted to riding or taking a drive through the plantations that had so excited my admiration at a distance. In reply, Adelaide informed me, with a mysterious smile, that those woods were indeed considered, and justly, by the Marquis, as the greatest ornament of his estate; but that the locked gardens I beheld formed the boundary of the excursions permitted to the females of the castle, and that she herself had never been beyond them, either to wander in the surrounding woods, or to witness or share in any of the sports and diversions usual to the nobility in the country, nor even to pay a single visit.

"How hateful, my dear Louisa, is, to a yet gay and happy mind, the unaccustomed idea of restraint! it requires years of acquaintance with calamity to convince us, that sometimes the most odious thraldom is not so fatal to virtue and happiness as too much liberty. From the moment I learned that the pleasure-grounds of Ro-

signano were to form the boundary of our excursions, their beauties vanished from my view. The scent of the pines, lemon-trees, and orangery, grew oppressive—the sight of eternal statues, parterres, and knots of flowers, uninteresting—and the fine workmanship of the gilded gates, which had been sent down from a distance, and at a vast expence, appeared to me no better than the iron spikes that might defend the inhospitable portal of some giant of romance.

"I conceived better hopes, by observing Adelaide descend to the saloon, evidently dressed for the reception of a numerous company. Her neck was covered with jewels, her robe was of the same fashion at that time worn at court, and her arms were adorned with bracelets and armlets of inestimable value, over which she had drawn a pair of white and perfumed gloves, covered with silk and gold embroidery. At the same time her countenance bore an expression of weariness and distaste,

distaste, ill suited to a festive occasion; and the tiara that pressed her jewelled brow seemed to give her a degree of pain, which robbed it of the serenity that was a far greater embellishment.

"On my rising to follow her example, Adelaide gently laid her hand on my arm —'Not so fast, my little Rosaura,' she said; 'nothing can become that faultless form, and those braided locks, better than that simple robe and net of silk; it is surely sufficient for the contemplation of the Marquis and myself; and other company you will never behold at the Castle of Rosignano, though it is his pleasure that I should be every day attired as for a festival; you may judge if it is not with a heavy heart.'

"I dissembled the slight disappointment I had experienced, not to increase the chagrin of Adelaide. The dinner-party, as she had announced it, consisted only of herself, me, and the Marquis of Marialva. Seldom have I witnessed a more dull and

sombrous entertainment; twice the number of servants waited, in solemn state and magnificent dresses—some were white, some black; but none spoke, a constraint for which they made amends with their eyes, which seemed to devour the untasted dainties they were obliged to set before their masters. I observed that Adelaide, whenever she had occasion for any thing, conversed with the domestics by signs; and beginning now to understand the character of the Marquis of Marialva, did not doubt this formed a part of the restrictions he imposed on her—a suspicion which she afterwards confirmed in a conversation, and told me it was a principle with the noble Spaniard her husband, that to exchange words with a man-servant of any degree, was degradation to a female of rank and beauty.

"After the repast was concluded, the Marquis entered into conversation with me, and showed himself not so disagreeable as I had, till now, believed him. He took

took pleasure in talking of the annals of his viceroyalty, and in drawing comparisons, which he was well able to make from experience, between the manners and customs that prevailed in different regions of the two hemispheres. His wife he seldom addressed, and he seemed to cherish towards her a degree of suppressed contempt and hatred, which at that time seemed to me most extraordinary.

"The conversation, which began to languish, was agreeably enough interrupted by the abrupt entrance of a lovely youth, habited and booted as fresh from the chase, and followed by two or three dogs; but of a countenance and features to obtain pardon if he had brought in twenty. He seated himself, unceremoniously, by the Marchioness, in contempt of her court velvet petticoat and heavy embroideries, and addressed some words of apology to the Marquis for his late arrival, which were received with an indulgence most unlike that nobleman's usual temper and beha-

viour. The fond father could indeed see no fault in this, his only son, whom he presented to me by the name of Don Cherubin Alfonzo de Lleira; and his mother, who knew he was the sole link by which she obtained from the Marquis the shadow of indulgence or esteem, was equally partial to him.

"I need not enumerate the days that followed; the description of one suffices for all. They passed on in the same dull monotony, only rendered interesting by the pleasure that my presence visibly gave to Adelaide, and occasionally varied by the playful attentions of Don Cherubin, or Don Cupid, the usual name by which he went at Rosignano. In age almost a child, but at once, by the kindness of nature, and the false indulgence of his parents, in stature, in tastes, and in manners, a young man, the pretensions of Don Cherubin de Lleira never seemed to give umbrage to his fond mother, although, in all other instances, she was justly tenacious of her

own

own claims to youth and beauty; and she would often laughingly assure me, with a satisfaction of which I was far from partaking, that I had taught Don Cherubin to love.

"This folly had no serious consequences, and was terminated by the second misfortune that marked my opening career. I was suddenly recalled from the Castle of Rosignano by a letter from my brother, announcing the alarming illness of my father, the Conde d'Almarez. Although our venerable parent had, up to this period, enjoyed an uninterrupted state of good health, his present disorder baffled all the skill of his physicians, and I arrived only in time to receive his last breath, and to listen to his solemn parting injunctions, which consigned me to the guardianship of my brother, Don Juan d'Avellana, now Conde d'Almarez.

"Deeply and mutually impressed with our irreparable loss, my brother's taste and my own equally led us to the indulgence

of seclusion. The first thing that roused my attention to the concerns of this world was the receipt of a letter from Adelaide, couched in the following extraordinary terms:—

'Your sacred sorrows call on me, my Rosaura, to condole with you. In my turn, I call on *you* to congratulate *me*. *You* have lost an invaluable parent and friend—*I* have escaped from a tyrant tormentor. The same period that consigned the good, the lamented Conde d'Almarez, to his grave, announced to the Marquis of Marialva that his hour was come. It is a strange coincidence, that one of the best beings, and one of the most unamiable, should have been summoned by the same fiat. The suddenness of the event, and the importance of the affairs I have had subsequently to settle, account sufficiently for my silence. I await you at the palace of

of Marialva, and long to press my Rosaura to the unchanged heart of her

'ADELAIDE.'

"By the tone of this letter, and the information that the writer was at Madrid, I was to understand that Adelaide was a young, rich widow, and by no means inconsolable. My brother entered my chamber, and, as I had no concealments with him, took the letter from my passive hand. He had scarcely run his eye over it, when he said, in the manner you, dear Louisa, are acquainted with, and which renders all he says so peculiarly impressive—'Don't go, Rosaura; let this be the termination of your unlucky intimacy. The woman who, whatever she has suffered from him in his lifetime, can openly rejoice in the death of her husband, must possess a mind as destitute of delicacy, as her heart is unacquainted with feeling.'

"Alas, what future calamities should I

have spared myself, had I, unresistingly, obeyed his counsels! But I argued, I remonstrated, against what I called this injustice, with all the warmth of a first and juvenile friendship. In justification of Adelaide, I painted the unamiable disposition of her deceased husband in the strongest colours.

"Don Juan became irresolute—'Be it as you will,' he said; 'I have made an effort *for the advantage of both of us*, which I have not courage to repeat. Often, after having pressed your introduction to her, did I repent having made you acquainted with the dangerous Adelaide.' But the evil was done.—'Go, Rosaura,' he continued, in that tone of irony he has at command—'go comfort the unfortunate fair one; perhaps a day will come when we shall *both* regret that my first and wisest impulse was not followed.'

"How prophetic were his words! how well aware was Don Juan of the weakness of our hearts! I hurried to the Palace of Marialva.

Marialva. From that time Adelaide and I were more intimately united than ever; yet, notwithstanding the unbecoming triumph expressed in the letter, which she had been far from intending for the eye of Don Juan, the first months of her widowhood were spent in a seclusion equal to that of a convent. She emerged, indeed, to dazzle and consume. Her volatile disposition had now full scope; yet there was something singular in her style of coquetry. Apparently insensible to soft impressions, and alike invulnerable to the recommendations of beauty or grace, the illusions of rank or riches, talent of every description was the game at which she flew; and, to change the dignity of wisdom into folly, to blast the laurels of genius by the mildewing force of resistless, hopeless passion, was her most delightful pastime.

"Never did a woman possess a greater number of requisites for such an undertaking; her infantine, playful manners,

her

her little fairy form, her seemingly modest eye, all, in the first instance, lulled the apprehensions of rivalry to sleep. Entering a circle, in which (though entitled almost to the highest place) she never, like other females, was tenacious of precedence, but seated herself, perhaps, below all the others, she soon made the spot she had chosen the centre of attraction; her bewitching *basilisk* eyes (the fascination of the rattlesnake, the irresistible power of magic alone can give any idea of them)—those eyes possessed for her lovers a species of charm, against which youth, beauty, and innocence, contended in vain.

"The attractions of her voice and musical performance were not inferior to those of her countenance; and not satisfied with this, she chose to join the imputed lustre of genius to the real possession of beauty and talent, and gave us to understand that she herself was the composer of the poetry and music, which received such added charms whenever she sung. Vain boast!

they

they owed their pathos, their soul-reaching expression, to the agonizing throbs of a heart that she already had broken; they were the expression of the distracted passion of a musician, whose celebrity had, according to her ruling principle, rendered him a worthy object of conquest in the eyes of the Marchioness of Marialva.

"With the wise she made use of other weapons; her reading and her travels were called into requisition with equal readiness and success to interest and amuse. Few women in conversation could equal the Marchioness of Marialva, and her beauty, her talents, her rank, and the splendour of her establishment, soon put her at the head of every thing that was brilliant at Madrid.

"The two cavaliers who at that moment paid the most assiduous court to her, were (as he had himself partly prophecied) my brother, and a minister of the interior, who did not possess one of Don Juan's personal advantages; but then, he had

high

high station, great talents, and, till now, was said to be insensible to the influence of female charms—sufficient reasons to determine Adelaide to enslave him.

"My brother, the Conde d'Almarez, and this Conde de Castel Blanco, vied with each other in celebrating every day some new and magnificent entertainment in her honour. The last was a bull-feast, promoted principally by the Conde de Castel Blanco, and the romantic temper of Adelaide gave it an antique turn, somewhat different from the generality of those national festivals. She had heard, or read, of a bull-feast celebrated in the Coliseum at Rome early in the fourteenth century, when the spirit of chivalry, and the exhibition of banners, trophies, and devices, was not yet extinct; and her fancy, which was very inflammable, presented her with the prospect of new triumphs, in the adoption of similar distinctions in the ensuing entertainment.

"The bull-feast, always an object of enthu-

enthusiasm among Spaniards, became doubly so with the females of rank at Madrid, from the prospect of the proposed innovations. Nothing else was talked of among the ladies of our circle; and as no woman possessed a greater fund of natural eloquence than Adelaide, on any subject in which her heart (I should rather say her fancy) was interested, it is not surprising that my youthful feelings rendered me a complete convert to the opinions that she supported with such grace and energy. —'Since I have known you, and wished to share every pleasure with you,' she would say, 'how have I regretted, my Rosaura, that I could not have you with me on the very spot, in that renowned and ever-sacred Coliseum*, where, with magnificence unparalleled, the national festival of your country was celebrated, surrounded by all the added associations that crowd upon

* In the year 1332 a bull-feast, after the fashion of the Moors and Spaniards, was celebrated in the Coliseum. All the other details to which the Marchioness alludes are historical.

upon the memory when beheld from the noblest edifice of immortal, imperial Rome! There, in that very scene, which had so often witnessed the splendid combats of the Amphitheatre, I beheld in imagination the seats around filled with the rank and beauty of the modern capital, gazing on feats as daring. Passing rapidly the lapse of centuries, my fancy peopled the empty ruins with the fair forms that, on that proud day, adorned the scarlet balconies. With the three bevies of beauty, still reremembered as the "squadrons" of the Trasteverini, and of the two noblest families of Rome, the Orsini and the Colonna, I saw the matron grace of the fair Jacova Di Rivere, as she led from beyond the Tyber the flower of that pure and native race who presented, in their features and countenance, the model of that antique and noble style of beauty which still exists among some of their successors. I saw the youthful knights rush forward for the reward of a smile from the lips of Savella Orsini,

Orsini, celebrated by the annalist as fairest where all were fair; and could sympathize in the disappointment of the Colonna, forbidden to dispute the prize of beauty with their proud rivals, from the misfortune of the youngest and loveliest of their house, prevented from appearing by an accidental sprain in the gardens of Nero's tower. Oh for the blast of that trumpet, which, sounding from the eternal city, to the limits of Rimini and Ravenna, roused all the Italian chivalry to arms! Each champion descended into the arena, to the encounter of the wild bull, armed with a single spear. Eighteen killed and nine wounded evinced the valour that still burned in the bosoms of Italian knights. Though the modern bull-fights be poor and trifling compared to this, yet in the splendour of the spectators I think we shall rival the past. The scarfs of the combatants will also display an equal variety of gallant devices, and every lady of distinction

tinction in Madrid is employed in embroidering them.

'The ladies, of whose resolutions I own myself the first mover, propose to rival the female squadrons of the Colonna, the Orsini, and the Trasteverini. By a singular chance, we are all three Marchionesses. The Marchioness of Merida intends to lead the ladies of Valencia—the Marchioness d'Angenza the beauties of Castile—and the Marchioness of Marialva,' continued Adelaide, with a caressing embrace, and a smile of most bewitching insinuation, 'has engaged to fill the balcony of Seville, and promises herself to carry off the prize of beauty, not in her own person, but in that of a young and unconscious Andalusian.'

"I could not mistake the meaning of a compliment so pointed, however it exaggerated the charms of the object of it; and stood awaiting my brother's fiat, in a delightful state of anticipation; when Adelaide and I were equally surprised and mortified by his declaring his determination

tion that I should not appear at this magnificent entertainment.

"When the Marchioness took leave, after having, for the first time, in vain exerted her rhetoric with him, Don Juan gave me his reasons for his apparently ungracious conduct.—'The Marchioness possesses a power, a fascinating power,' he said, 'that she abuses; but never so much as to-day did she unveil the deficiencies of her heart. You are young, my Rosaura; you pant to witness an amusement at which you have never been present, and you think this restriction unkind. Yet I know your heart; superior, like myself, to your age and country, you would shudder at the aspect of barbarity, and ere half the bloody sport were over, would wish you had never countenanced it by your presence. *Who* are to discountenance it in this country, if the way to a more humane, a more liberal tone of feeling, be not led by those who should know no others—by soft, and high-born, and youth-

ful

ful females. I shall myself be absent from it, and thus, as far as my influence extends, prepare for the gradual amelioration of manners, that I still flatter myself will dawn, and at no distant period, upon benighted Spain.'

"Such was the discourse my brother held to me, a discourse equally sanctioned by reason and humanity, but which perhaps no other young nobleman of his day would have acknowledged. But Don Juan's mind soared (as he himself was conscious) beyond his age, beyond his country. Originally formed for the noblest views, but warped to error by repeated wrongs, such as your father was then, I love, my Louisa, to represent him. Oh that the world could see the portrait of him that still remains engraven on Rosaura's heart! I was at that time too young to admit the justice of his reasonings; one dazzling image of pleasure swam before my eyes, and rendered me deaf to the voice of reason and propriety.

"To

"To women, whose best praise is humility, and who, upon every trying emergency, seek in the counsels of the superior sex a refuge from their own inexperience, the advice and directions of a brother, affectionately anxious for their welfare, are of incalculable advantage upon entering into life, and never should a sister desire to shake off the easy yoke. Even where the ages are alike, the difference in opportunities and education must give weight to the judgment of a brother; but where, as in my case, that relative possesses the advantage of many years, and stands in the place of a parent to his sister, his opinions should be received with the authority of a law. Pleasing dependence and dignified submission—best sequel to the obedience of a daughter, and prelude to the duties of a wife!

"A second time I ventured to disagree with Don Juan; and when my foolish arguments proved ineffectual to induce him to accede to my desire of appearing at this festival,

festival, I (it almost calls a blush on my cheek, at this distant period, to relate it) indulged in repining, until discontent assumed the appearance of indisposition; and Margarita d'Aguilar, by no means the most prudent and clearsighted of gouvernantes, declared, on the day of the bull-feast, that it would be as much as my life was worth to remove me from our palace to the country house, whither Don Juan, in order to avoid the appearance of affectedly shunning an amusement of which all Madrid were partakers, chose, for a few days, to retire. My brother, therefore, left me under the care of this governess, with many tender assurances of a speedy return.

"He was scarcely gone, when Adelaide came to visit me. She had been much surprised by the refusal of Don Juan to let me partake of the pleasures that had been so long in contemplation, and now came to make a last effort to induce me to accompany her.—'What! embroidering! my little Rosaura?' said the lively Marchio-

ness,

ness; 'the scarfs of the knights are completed, and no other embroidery should be thought of, till this great, this delightful day is over. Don't talk to me of illness—restraint and disappointment are the only complaints under which you suffer: allow me to prescribe for them; the medicines I propose shall not be nauseous—amusement, liberty, and admiration. Margarita too shall enjoy the spectacle, and then I am sure she will start no unseasonable objections.'

"Much as I desired to comply, I still retained strength of mind enough again to allege my brother's prohibition, and in so doing I gave, more at length than I had formerly done, his reasons for disliking the principles on which these national festivals were founded.

"The Marchioness was struck by what I said, and shocked to find the barbarous pleasure she had expressed in the anticipated feast of blood, had so greatly weakened her hold upon my brother's heart.

 "I had,

"I had, however, often observed in Adelaide, in the midst of her dark and crooked policy, a certain weakness and frivolity of mind, that forbade her to give up the attainment of a favourite though trifling object, however it might militate against her more serious plans. She felt this propensity in the instance before us. For the present moment nothing seemed so desirable to her, as to lure me to the bull-feast.—'I have been disappointed in two of my principal beauties,' she said; 'the Countess of Campillos and Donna Isidora de Castro, who were to have ensured to the balcony of Seville the superiority over those of Castile and Valencia; and if you too fail me, my Rosaura, I shall heartily regret I ever acceded to the idea of the entertainment. But you will not, I am sure, refuse the first earnest request of your Adelaide; and I,' she continued, with an arch smile, 'will undertake to make your peace with the negligent dragon, Don Juan. Nay,' added the Marchioness,

chioness, more seriously, 'to prove to you how much I respect his opinions, and wish' (here she heaved a hypocritical sigh) 'we were sufficiently enlightened to adopt them, I will (as all the ancient regulations of this noble entertainment have been submitted to me for additions and revision) put it in your power, my Rosaura, to diminish at pleasure the terrors of the combat. You know it is usual, on these occasions, if the bull has fought well, for us ladies to wave our handkerchiefs; and then his life is saved: now on this occasion the privilege shall be extended—when you consider the fight to have lasted long enough, or particularly wish the safety of any of the combatants, only wave your handkerchief, and your example shall lead us all; still this much I must say, that once launched into the true spirit of the glorious sport, your heart is no Spanish one if you avail yourself of my permission.'

'Oh, do let us go, dear lady!' said Margarita—Margarita, who had been placed

over me to strengthen my wavering resolutions! but who, dazzled by the gracious offer and glowing descriptions of the Marchioness, was now become her warmest partisan.

" I paused—I hesitated. Adelaide saw her advantage. The lessons I had received from her at Rosignano had taught me to place happiness in being the idol of a surrounding crowd—to catch fire at the idea at the triumph she prepared for herself this day, as leader of the squadron of fair dames of Andalusia.

" Almost dragged from my seat, and all my petty ailments forgotten, I was hurried to the looking-glass between the Marchioness and the Duenna. Adelaide presided at my toilette, and Margarita expedited it with a promptitude that left me no further leisure, if I had even possessed inclination for reflection; and when I had finished it, the raptures of the Marchioness at my metamorphosis completely put my good resolutions to flight.

" My

"My heart smote me as I was stepping into her carriage, at the astonished look of an old domestic, who had doubtless heard of my indisposition and inability to accompany my brother into the country. But this parting pang was speedily dissipated in Adelaide's lively rattle, and I had no further *pressentiments* to inform me that the most fatal moment of my life was approaching, for it was at that bull-feast that I first saw Don Alvaro de Solis.

"Arrived at the gay scene; the pleasures of which Adelaide had so vividly described to me, the first *coup d'œil* I own was enchanting. The ladies of Valencia, Andalusia, and the Castiles, were, as she had projected, marshalled into three squadrons, and took their seats in separate balconies, distinguished by the different colours of the cloth or tapestry that adorned them.

"The balcony of Valencia was further distinguished by a sort of uniform worn by the ladies—it was white and gold, with

 a high

a high Hungarian cap, made of scarlet cloth, adorned with gold fringe. That of Castile exhibited the ancient Spanish dress; the predominant colour was therefore black; and though a great profusion of jewelery gave some splendour to the appearance of the ladies of whom this second group was composed, the general impression it produced was certainly gloomy. In direct contrast to this, the balcony of Seville (*our* balcony let me call it) presented the most agreeable variety. It not only contained a greater number of young and beautiful women, but the light and elegant taste of Adelaide seemed to have pervaded the mind of every individual. French and Italian fashions mingled gaily with those of our own country; a field of flowers, a bed of tulips, can alone give an idea of the spectacle this female squadron presented. Such a sight may have been seen on some high solemnity in another country, but never surely in Spain.

"Instead of blue or red cloth, our bal-

cony

cony was lined with the most beautiful tapestry, and adorned with the freshest flowers. As I entered it, the Marchioness pushed me forward to one of the most conspicuous seats, and, as usual, was taking her place nearer the end. Blushing, I declined the honour, and made a movement for her to pass before me. She laughed, and whispered behind her fan—'Now you think this vastly obliging, my Rosaura, and it is, in fact, the direct contrary. We women of the world prefer the end seats, where we can more easily converse with the passing cavaliers; while you young beauties are most sure of obtaining the general homage of the crowd, by sporting your charms in the centre of the circle.'

"It was with this appearance of frankness in explaining her little plans of coquetry, that Adelaide always gained her point; while I, who felt almost equal alarm and delight at finding myself in a situation so unusual, obtained her consent at least

that I should not be removed from her side.

"Adelaide now run her eyes along the line of youthful champions that began to present themselves, in order to observe if her directions had been obeyed; and a vivid expression of delight was the result of her scrutiny—'See, see!' said she, 'some of these devices breathe the true spirit of ancient chivalry—an ermine, "Less pure, less fair"—these words denote some concealed lover of yours, Rosaura—"Highest in birth, in valour, and in love"—those again bespeak a prince among the combatants. Some are the very same that were exhibited in the Coliseum—"I am alone, like the youngest of the Horatii"—"I live disconsolate"—"I burn under the ashes."

"I was much amused by the remarks of the Marchioness, who generally added some short anecdote of the champions to her observations upon the devices they had chosen—'Yonder must be a gallant stranger, for it is a French motto and device,' she resumed—'a golden star, "Pour

être

être heureux un bel astre suffit"—a sun, "Ardent and eternal." But what do I see here?—does *he too* put himself upon the lists?'

"As Adelaide uttered these words in an accent of unfeigned surprise, she directed my attention to a cavalier at that moment passing; he bore for his device a sun struggling through a cloud; the motto, which was in Italian, possessed a degree of peculiarity and mystery I had not observed in any of the others, it was—'*Quando sarà?*' But it was not at that moment I thought of his device and bearings: as he flashed past us, never, to my remembrance, had I beheld a countenance so romantically, so poetically beautiful. Profound melancholy was its characteristic; but it was a melancholy so soft, that it inspired in every heart a desire either to sooth or share it. *

"I eagerly requested Adelaide to explain to me the motto the strange cavalier

 had

* "When shall it be?"

had chosen.—'*Quando sarà?*' '*When shall it be?*' repeated Adelaide; 'it alludes to his history. That is Don Alvaro de Solis.' —'And what is his history?'—'A reasonable question in a place like this! expect me to recite a whole history without stopping! This sudden curiosity and interest denote something very suspicious, my Rosaura; but now I recollect I must speak to that gentleman;' and without heeding the confusion into which she had thrown me, Adelaide beckoned to her the 'knight of the struggling sun,' as she playfully called him—a signal which was instantly obeyed by Don Alvaro de Solis; and the Marchioness and he entered into a familiar conversation, which filled surrounding rivals of his happiness with envy.

"As the first tones of his voice fell upon my heart (for to say they reached my *ear* would not describe their powerful melody), I thought that they explained the interest his countenance had excited—both together spoke a mind in which strong

passions,

passions, sensibility, and genius, alike predominated, but predominated, alas! only for the misery of himself and others. As he conversed with the Marchioness without being made known to me, I could remark the varying play of his features, which did not long retain their natural impress of sadness in such charming society. The conversation of Adelaide was always found so amusing by his sex, that it was impossible to preserve dejection in her company. The extreme beauty of his countenance, when animated by gaiety, became still more remarkable, and his presence seemed to give the last finish to a scene which Adelaide's taste had rendered unusually romantic, by embellishing it with the prototype of one of the heroes of romance.

"I had now forced my attention to some other part of the circle, not to seem listening to a conversation which was not intended particularly for my ear, when my notice was irresistibly attracted by the lively reply of Adelaide to some observa-

tion of Don Alvaro de Solis—'No, no, Don Alvaro, do not try to mend the first suggestion of sincerity, by adding an awkward compliment. I assure you I can spare it—nay, take pleasure in the avowal, that the balcony of Seville owes its superiority to the charms of my youthful friend, Donna Rosaura d'Almarez.'

"Was it possible? by the side of the dazzling, the overpowering Marchioness, this interesting stranger had spoken—had thought of me? Still Adelaide did not offer to introduce him; but I was conscious that he must guess, by the colour that mantled on my cheek, I was acquainted with the nature of his admiring whisper; and though I durst not raise my eyes to him, I felt that *his* were turned upon me, with that long, long tender and ardent gaze that sinks into the soul.

"All the intentions with which I had appeared that morning were frustrated. Gay and secure myself, I had looked to produce a general impression, and to laugh

at

at home with Adelaide at the remembrance of the homage I had received. Instead of this, I felt my heart irresistibly drawn towards *one*, and that interesting one a stranger—a man whom Adelaide did not think worthy even of an introduction to me. It was evident I had pleased him; but the pleasure I felt in return from that conviction was of a soft and tender nature, quite distinct from my anticipated triumphs, and far more dangerous; it was mingled with feelings such as I had never known before—feelings resembling humility and gratitude, joined to a strange anxiety lest the impression I had produced on him should be succeeded by dislike—a preposterous fear, which could only have its origin in my intense desire to please.

"But now the heart-stirring business of the day begun. The lists were opened. Thrice sounded the animating clarion, and every eye was bent in eager expectation towards the circle. The scene of social

and festive pleasure—the notes of harmony that floated on the air—the delightful though secret homage I had received from Don Alvaro de Solis, all swelled my heart with an overflowing sensation of pleasure, and as from habit I always associated Don Juan's idea with all my most gratifying enjoyments, I could not forbear thinking if that dear brother had been present to witness the glorious scene, he could no longer continue to disapprove of it.

"The signal was given. The bull, wild rushing from his den, met the encounter of unnumbered lances. Don Alvaro was among the first to descend into the arena; he distinguished by a graceful (oh, how graceful!) salute the balcony of Seville, and his last look hung on me.

"Through the crowd of colours and devices my eye followed the 'clouded sun' with untired attention. Don Alvaro's spear drew the first blood from the infuriated animal; crowds shouted, ladies applauded,

plauded, and the struggle grew thick and dreadful.

"I turned again, but how had a few moments changed the scene! Don Alvaro's lucid arms were stained with the life-blood of his milk-white courser. The animal plunged, reeled, struggled in the agonies of death; he staggered with his master exactly in the course of the bull. With difficulty I repressed a scream of agony—one step farther had thrown Don Alvaro at the mercy of the brutal foe. He was preserved—collecting all his strength, the generous beast, as with a last effort, extricated his feeble frame from the perilous position into which it had placed his master, and after bearing him to a spot of comparative safety, he sunk down and expired.

"While the horse of De Solis lay extended in death, and another, mortally wounded, was galloping in agony round the arena, a third met with a still more frightful death from off the horns of the bull,

and

and Adelaide, followed by all our female party, applauded as each successively fell. I turned sick with horror.

" And now the bloody work was drawing to a close. Magnificently dressed, and armed with the weapon of death, the matadore advanced, and bowed for permission to kill the bull. It was granted. I saw the stately animal fall beneath the murdering stroke, in the midst of the circle that he had covered with blood and death. I thought all was over, and leaning back, covered my face with my handkerchief, to conceal so many objects of disgust. Now, now was the moment that I remembered the prophecy of Don Juan; bitterly did I condemn myself for indulging in this unfeminine, this odious amusement.

" But this was no time for reflection; another bull was led forth; it belonged to the Conde de Castel Blanco; and this combat was held more particularly in honour of Adelaide. Again Don Alvaro de Solis

was

was foremost among the assailants; he had procured another horse; above all shone the mysterious device (alas! become my heart's loadstar) '*quando sarà?*' The combat was more fierce and bloody than the former one. Suddenly a shriek was heard even from the savage spectators—maddening, streaming with blood issuing from unnumbered wounds, the enraged animal had burst through all his assailants—his fierce eye distinguished one—it was Alvaro—a crimson torrent flowed from his arm—it was no longer the blood of his steed with which he was stained—oh God! it was the lifeblood of De Solis himself that flowed. Hastily he wrapped his scarf around the wound, and prepared for another attack; but I remembered, at that moment, the permission Adelaide had given me; fear, virgin modesty, every consideration yielded to my immediate impulse to save Alvaro's life—the white handkerchief was displayed. The female band all followed my example; for mercy

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is, after all, the natural habit of our souls. A murmur of disapprobation ran through the disappointed crowd; but every thing was obliged to give way to a regulation established by Adelaide herself, the supreme object of the festival. The conflict ceased: the life of the animal was saved, and Don Alvaro de Solis exposed to no further perils.

"The variety of feelings I had experienced during the vicissitudes of this eventful day affected me so violently, that during my return home in the carriage of the Marchioness, I was alike incapable of thought or conversation.

"After being recruited by the repose of a night, I was able to bear the subsequent interview with Adelaide—'I never had a greater mind to chide,' said she, at the same time embracing me tenderly, 'but that pale cheek, that languid eye, impose silence on me at once. Still I must ask, my dear, what demon, envious of our triumphs, provoked you to behave in a manner

ner so unworthy of your quality, your sex, and spirit, as irregularly to put an end to the noblest and most chivalrous diversion we inherit from antiquity?'—I reminded her of our convention.—'Agreed,' said Adelaide; 'but when I proposed that foolish composition with your scruples, it was merely from complaisance to what you told me was your own and your brother's opinion; and never did I think you would avail yourself of the privilege.'

"The Marchioness had now broken through the boundaries of politeness and compassion by which she asserted herself at first to be influenced, and seemed disposed to proceed to reproaches, had I not interrupted her; for I was shocked to see that the ill-chosen friend of my inexperienced youth—she who, in conjunction with my governess, had led me into the commission of a capital fault, should be the first to upbraid me, and for what? for retaining some remnant of the feelings that

form

form the most appropriate charm and ornament of our sex.

" Of myself I proposed that we should take the air together, for, to confess the truth, this was the first time that a visit from Adelaide proved unpleasant to me.

" Under such a directress, you may imagine we chose the most crowded and fashionable part of Madrid, and the Marchioness, as I had foreseen, speedily forgot her discontent, in looking out for admiration. Many cavaliers, of course, we met, who had been distinguished in the conflicts of the day before; and the agreeable though trifling topics that occur between persons of distinction recently engaged in the same amusement, were discussed by Adelaide with her usual grace.

" Suddenly my heart beat—a gentleman on a beautiful horse, distinguished by the elegance of its trappings and decorations, rode briskly towards us.—' Now is the time,' whispered Adelaide, with her peculiar laugh, which had in it a gaiety that was contagious,

contagious, but at the same time a degree of malice—'now is the time, if you wish to be satisfied as to the opinion of Don Alvaro de Solis respecting the——what shall I call it?—damsel-errantry you displayed yesterday; you have nothing to do but to hide yourself, by sinking back in the carriage; I will advance my head to address him, and we shall have his real sentiments—hush! no difficulties, I beg—here he comes!'

"She had hardly concluded these words, and enabled me to do as she directed, when the deep, thrilling, eloquent tones of Don Alvaro's startling voice sounded in my ear, as he rode up and accosted the Marchioness. His inquiries were of the simplest and most usual kind—they were delivered in the very same words that I had heard repeatedly used by other cavaliers that day, yet they no longer appeared the same: the common-place nature of his expressions, which consisted merely of those conventional terms which politeness

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on such occasions commands, the bare repetition of her title, as he respectfully addressed my friend, in return for her acknowledgment, even these circumstances enhanced the mysterious charm of every word he uttered, seemed to prove that no expression, however trivial, could be heard with indifference when falling from the lips of De Solis.

"The cavalier seemed rather in haste, but Adelaide amused him by starting various topics. I remained in an agony of solicitude. Several female names were mentioned with praise—the beauties of the balconies of Valencia, of Seville, and Castile. —'But you do not tell me whether your heart still follows the direction your eyes took yesterday, Don Alvaro,' (as Adelaide carelessly ran over these words, *my* heart seemed ready to burst its confinement)—'what do you think of the young Senhora of Almarez?'

"De Solis paused as for recollection—'The lady of the white handkerchief, you mean?'

mean?' at length he repeated, with a tone, oh, how cuttingly cold and contemptuous! 'her first appearance in public, I presume?'

"I cannot describe to you, my Louisa, the sensations of burning shame and mortification with which I heard these few words, the whole meaning of which I comprehended in their fullest latitude and extent. My behaviour had appeared in the eyes of Don Alvaro completely childish and unbecoming, and had totally effaced the momentary impression my few attractions had created in his breast; but what was Don Alvaro's opinion to me? Ask it of that incipient passion which is so often born in those haunts of dissipation into which I had so madly rushed—that passion which was beginning to make me feel the first throbs of its power, by inflicting one of those painful heartaches which are never, like the more common-place calamities of life, soothed by compassion or relief.

"Some more conversation passed between

tween Adelaide and De Solis, but I did not distinguish it. Vexation and pique, in making themselves completely masters, of my soul, seemed to have sealed up my senses also; yet I heard the sound of his horse's departing feet, and starting as from a trance, felt as if I had just experienced some heavy loss, then blushing, recollected *that* loss was the good opinion of a stranger.

"Adelaide artfully tried to diminish my vexation, at the same time that she affected not to perceive its extent—'So, the "*Chevalier au soleil offusqué*," said she, laughing, 'considers you, my Rosaura, as little better than another envious *cloud* sent by the demon of discord, to overcast his promised glory; but you must allow something for the disappointment of being checked in his career, just at the moment he thought to signalize his dexterity and courage. The ardour of our Spanish youth to distinguish themselves in these truly noble exercises passes certainly all bounds

of

of reason.'—'Ah, madam,' said I, blushing, and almost in tears, 'I hope that Don Alvaro de Solis does not think—does not suspect the motive that—at least it was not *from him* that I deserved such a severe construction——'—'Recollect yourself, my Rosaura,' said the Marchioness, with the admirable composure and self-possession of a woman of the world, 'neither Don Alvaro nor myself can or *do* suspect any thing but the truth you know—that your humanity was shocked by the death and tortures of so many noble animals (a sad concomitant, I grant you, of a noble institution), and that you availed yourself, rather *mal-apropos*, of my silly permission to put an end to the conflict. *Au reste*,' she continued, with well-assumed indifference, 'your behaviour could hardly have given offence to a man whose good opinion was of so little consequence. Don Alvaro de Solis, though so profusely endowed with the favours of nature, possesses scarcely rank or fortune to entitle him to the

 acquaint-

acquaintance of the Senhora d'Almarez, far less to——But whither am I wandering? I merely meant to say, the very name he bears is not his own; he is the son of an Hidalgo of some obscure stock in Grenada, adopted, and finally disinherited, by the caprice of a late grandee, the Duke de Solis. He is now at Madrid to receive the trifling legacy bequeathed to him, rather in contempt than kindness, by the nobleman who was till lately so lavishly his benefactor. It is to the disappointment of his high-blown hopes, and the uncertainty in which he must be of ever seeing himself restored to a brilliant station in society, that Don Alvaro doubtless alluded in choosing the device of an overclouded sun. So,' continued Adelaide, 'we will leave him to his sorrowful contemplations; for though I never heard the cause of his quarrel with the Duke de Solis, yet I doubt not the grandee had good reasons for his conduct, and for obliging poor Don Alvaro to retain nothing

of

of his expected prosperity but an empty name, to which he has thought fit to add the mysterious interest of the well-chosen motto—"*Quando sarà?*"

"I could not forbear remarking that Adelaide's conduct on this and the day before, to the interesting cavalier, bore few marks of that indifference which she affected in her conversation with me; but my spirits were too much lowered to allow me to give utterance to my thoughts, and the vexations of that memorable day were only the prelude to those I was to suffer in consequence of my disobedience. I do not mean that my sufferings resulted from the anger of Don Juan; that dear brother, on his return, though deeply hurt at my total disregard to his wishes, yet, on being informed by the Marchioness and Margarita of the palliating circumstances, overlooked my fault with a nobleness and magnanimity that penetrated my heart more than a thousand reprimands.

"After such an instance of generosity,

can you believe that I was mad enough in a third instance to disobey him? From this time it appeared to me that Don Alvaro de Solis attached himself particularly to Adelaide. *She* was the object of his attention in all public places, and as it was in her company that I generally made my appearance there, I could not avoid being a frequent witness of it. There was another person who observed this conduct, and to whom it gave greater umbrage, and this was my brother, Don Juan, who, I have already told you, was a pretender to Adelaide's favour.—'Who is this favourite of your friend, the Marchioness?' he asked me one day, with evident ill humour; 'he is unknown to any of our nobility, and has not even had himself presented.'—'He is a gentleman,' I replied, blushing.—'So is every Spaniard that does not reckon a Jew or a Moor among his ancestors,' returned Don Juan, scornfully; 'and we have several of those *gentlemen* condescending to make shoes or to mend

our

our hedges; but *such* are not the persons entitled to the countenance of rank and beauty. Adelaide has unveiled her real character to me. Never, even if she employed every effort to attract me, would I bestow a serious thought on her again.'

"Don Juan said this in the full conviction he could act up to his professions, yet, till now, her fascinations had induced him to accompany me whenever I visited her. This evening he suffered me to go alone, yet not till after he had congratulated himself on Adelaide's having never presumed to introduce the untitled stranger to *my* notice, nor till he had cautioned me to keep her to this line of conduct, and carefully to avoid, myself, giving any countenance to Don Alvaro de Solis. How well I observed this caution will be seen in the sequel.

"I cannot say that this part of Adelaide's conduct had pleased *me*. Though I knew not of what exactly to complain, it seemed to me that, throughout the

whole transaction, she had acted disingenuously, that she had promoted my appearing in an unfavourable light, and that on this, and many other occasions, she had robbed me of the approbation that was my due. I was beginning (but only beginning) like my brother, to open my eyes to her true character.

"Arriving rather early at the Palace of Marialva, I found Adelaide alone, but dressed to receive company. We had hardly exchanged the usual salutations, when, fixing her fine eyes upon me, and throwing her lovely arms around me—'What is the reason, my Rosaura,' she softly said, 'that I find you thus changed for your Adelaide? Your eyes no longer express the same pleasure at meeting—your lips no longer reply spontaneously to the fond expressions of mine!'

"Startled at the suddenness of a charge, of the truth of which I was but too conscious, I replied, with that constraint and effort at justification which is so sure a

symptom

symptom of declining friendship, that I was not aware of being in any respect wanting in those acknowledgments that were due to her many kindnesses.—'Ah! is it come to this?' exclaimed Adelaide, in an accent that seemed one of genuine sorrow; 'I spoke not to draw forth a cold justification, but to rouse in your heart its latent tenderness. Is it possible that it is never to be restored to me? Oh, do not say so, my Rosaura! If so, how shall I regret the halcyon days gone by for ever—when shall I know such moments of heartfelt happiness? Oh, *Quando, quando sarà?*'

"As she concluded these words, with a second embrace, and an inquiring look, in which fondness mingled again with a degree of arch raillery, I felt the blood mount painfully to my temples. It was impossible any longer to conceal the true cause of my estrangement from the too-penetrating Adelaide. Giving up the attempt, I threw myself in her arms, while some tears fell to my mortified feelings,

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and besought her to spare me.—'Spare you, and serve you too!' resumed the dangerous Adelaide with revived warmth; 'but never again, my Rosaura, attempt to conceal one movement of that little heart from my inspection. And so *this* was the cause of your resentment; and you thought me serious these few days—you whom I have made the confidante of my principles—you to whom I have confessed that my heart was inaccessible to impressions of obscure merit,—that it required acknowledged talents or fame to interest me, or,' she continued, looking down and blushing, 'such a combination of qualities as I have never seen but in *kindred* merit to *yours*.'

"I was well aware that this confession was intended to have been repeated, with proper modifications, to my brother; but it was now *my* turn to exert prudence for Adelaide. I knew, though she did not, that he was lost to her for ever, and that the estrangement her own vain and light character had begun, was completed by the

the sight of Donna Elvira de Mosquea, in whom he fondly believed he had found a treasure of beauty and innocence, and had therefore determined (notwithstanding the inequality of their conditions) to make her his wife."

Donna Rosaura paused; a heavy sigh escaped her, caused by various overwhelming recollections.—"We were none of us designed to be happy," interrupted Louisa in a faint voice, and besought her aunt to relate the consequences of her eclaircissement and reconciliation with the Marchioness.

"It was scarcely concluded," resumed Donna Rosaura, "when the arrival of company put an end to all further dangerous communications. The apartments were lighted up with magnificence, and Adelaide was soon surrounded with an unusual crowd. Though I shared with the Marchioness in many flattering attentions, yet, at every pause, I experienced an invincible inclination to relapse into

 reverie,

reverie, and a vague sense of dissatisfaction mixed itself with all my enjoyments. It was in this disposition of mind that I had moved a little from the circle of importunate admirers, and was sitting by myself in a balcony, enjoying the freshness of the evening, when I was startled by approaching footsteps, and by a soft hand being laid gently on my shoulder. At the same moment the voice of Adelaide breathed the words—'Donna Rosaura, Don Alvaro de Solis!'

"It seems strange at this distance of time to describe the revulsion produced in my mind by these few words. The length of time this introduction had been delayed—the thoughts of Don Juan's parting prohibition—the conversation I had had with Adelaide previous to the arrival of the company, all gave it an unusual importance in my eyes, and I returned the profound and respectful homage of De Solis with that embarrassment and confusion so painful to the woman who feels, so grati-

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fying to the man who excites it. Not seeming to perceive my emotion, the Marchioness withdrew from the window, and Don Alvaro, taking a seat next me, we were left, as it were, alone in the midst of a crowd.

"A singular thought passed through my mind. This incident had to me the appearance as if Adelaide had tacitly promised to restore the cavalier to my chains, and had thus performed her promise. My conscious embarrassment was fast increasing, but it was quickly dissipated by the charming conversation of De Solis. Without appearing to see what was passing in my mind, without, on the contrary, appearing indifferent to any of its emotions, his manner was that of one who has at length obtained a blessing to which he had ardently aspired; and in the interchange of sentiments that took place between us in the ensuing half hour, we had advanced further in our dangerous path than a dozen formal meetings under other circum-

stances might have effected. I wondered what was become of the contempt he had expressed of the resentment I had experienced after the bull-feast, and awaited the dispersion of the company to obtain an explanation from Adelaide of these seeming inconsistencies. In the mean time, all the past only gave a zest to the present moment; it seemed to me like a reconciliation—like a recovery of something I had lost, and had but too much valued. Don Alvaro was by my side, his eyes and lips spoke the language of tenderness and admiration, and in a crowd he seemed to breathe for no other object but me.

"My intentions of obtaining an explanation from Adelaide were defeated. De Solis outstayed the company as well as myself. My suspicions, I own, revived at this, and my ill humour was fast returning; but I soon perceived that Adelaide was not an object of peculiar interest in Alvaro's eyes, and she immediately resumed all

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the advantages that in general she so fatally possessed in *mine*.

"The last stragglers had now received the parting compliments of Adelaide and the youthful Don Alfonzo, Marquis of Marialva—some of the alabaster lamps began to burn dim—the flowers hung in fading wreaths on every ornament—and the sounds of music and mirth faintly died away to the surrounding echoes, and still Don Alvaro remained in confidential conversation with Adelaide, who had placed him between herself and me upon a sofa. I cannot describe to you the pensive charm of this calm moonlight hour, that succeeded to the broad glare of gaiety and dissipation.

"The manner of De Solis was influenced by the transition. He dwelt on his faded hopes, on his blasted fortunes, with the melancholy earnestness of one who feels conscious of addressing a kindly interested audience. In the pleasure he seemed to take in selecting such themes,

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De Solis might be termed an egotist, if such a term can be applied to a person whose discourse never wearied, always interested, and who, in drawing your attention to himself, employed it on an object the most pleasing.—'Why did the Duke de Solis elevate me into a class to which I was not entitled,' he said, 'only to cast me back again into an obscurity he first taught me to despise? Is there, among the errors of selfish pride, *one* more deserving of reprehension than the cold egotism that often leads the great to engross the best faculties, stimulate the hopes, and claim the gratitude of some apparently favoured object of adoption, and then cruelly and capriciously disappoint all the views they themselves have been the means of implanting in the aspiring bosom?'—'Have I not heard,' interrupted the young Marquis of Marialva, wearied at observing Alvaro engross so much female interest, 'that the early part of the life of the Duke de Solis was clouded by a misadventure *a mésalliance*—

liance—something of which he afterwards severely repented?'—'It was,' replied Don Alvaro; 'and on meeting the late Duchess de Solis, who combined all the virtues and all the graces that distinguish her rank and sex, he wondered at the mad infatuation that had led him, in an evil hour, to bestow his hand on an obscure and rustic beauty. He was fortunate in the sequel, for, on declaring his change of sentiments to his village maiden, she was content to give up a claim, which would never, in fact, have been recognised by his family, and, portioned by the Duke, became the happy wife of a rich cultivator in Grenada. And thus it should be,' continued Don Alvaro, with increasing earnestness; 'and thus should juvenile follies ever be repaired!'

"He fell into a deep reverie, from which he only roused himself to relapse into a strain of discourse so melancholy, that I felt myself involuntarily affected. I was ashamed to discover the power possessed

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by this interesting, this dangerous being, who had the art of making his good qualities, his misfortunes, all alike subservient to the purpose of exciting a powerful prepossession in his own favour.

"The expressive tones of his voice ever exercised a despotic power over my feelings. Dreading that he should observe it, I rose abruptly from my seat, and, turning towards a window, left my handkerchief, bedewed with involuntary tears, in forgetfulness upon a flowerstand.

"My action seemed to remind Don Alvaro of his slight trespass upon decorum. He rose to take leave, apologizing for the length of time he had delayed his departure—an inadvertence which he attributed to the conversation of the fascinating Marchioness.

"Adelaide admitted his excuses; but when the gentlemen had left us together, said, with an air of cold dignity, of which I was no longer the dupe—'Don Alvaro de Solis is not, *like some others*, a favoured intimate.

intimate. He should not have forgot himself as he did to-night—but I know to what to attribute it.'—' You had better have given him a hint at the time,' said I, smiling. ' You seemed to endure him with exemplary patience. But this reminds me, lovely Adelaide, that I too am trespassing on your repose.'

" At this moment I missed my handkerchief. Adelaide let me search for it a few minutes, and then said—' Ah, Rosaura ! I can return your raillery with interest —That handkerchief is in the possession of Don Alvaro de Solis! he saw the precious *pearls* with which it was embroidered— an Indian rose had shed its leaves upon the handkerchief, where it was carelessly laid—Don Alvaro hastily seized upon it, pearls, roses, embroidery and all, and is no doubt addressing his orisons at this moment to it.'

" I felt hurt at the trifling of Adelaide and the freedom of Don Alvaro. Adelaide continued—' In very truth he adores you ;

you; and this is only one of the thousand mad things he does every day in the indulgence of his passion. His business at Madrid has been long completed, and *you* are the magnet that detains him here with the spell of an enchantress.'—'Oh, Marchioness,' I answered, reproachfully, 'how can you thus exaggerate the sentiments of Don Alvaro, when you know it is *your* society, not mine, that has been the spell which has hitherto enchained him.'—'And why did he seek my society? Because he was sure, at least, of the pleasure of seeing and hearing you; and every time we met, he has been tormenting me to present him to you.'—'And for what reason did you at length comply?' said I, vexed at my own easiness, and willing (I am ashamed to own) to throw some blame upon another.

"Adelaide at first seemed absolutely startled at the directness of my question. At length she replied—'Why he absolutely worried me into it. He is not,' she continued, looking earnestly at me, 'very easily

easily refused. Then, you know, till to-night, your brother was always by your side.'—'Would he had been so still!' I interrupted, with a presentiment of the evils that were in store for me. 'Then, Adelaide, you will not persuade me that the day after the bull-feast, the opinion he expressed of me, when he knew not of my presence, was not sincere?'—'You do not yet thoroughly understand the nature of love, Rosaura. That of Don Alvaro is timid, and almost hopeless.'

"A domestic of the Count's was present, and very near us. He dreaded this disclosure of his real sentiments, and hastily concealed them under a semblance of contempt. '*Pour le reste,*' continued Adelaide, laughing, 'I know you are not so much disobliged as you pretend to be; so give over this affectation, my Rosaura, which is unworthy of you, and cannot impose upon me; and let your disagreement with De Solis be terminated as it was begun, by a white handkerchief.'—'Oh, Adelaide,

laide, you may treat the matter as lightly as you please, but how shall I answer my offended brother?'—'Don't answer him at all; he need know nothing of what has passed.'

"Had I possessed the courage to resist this pernicious counsel, and to have acknowledged my first fault to Don Juan, it might have yet been repaired; but a modest diffidence, joined to the dread of present pain, sealed my lips.

"From this moment I must date an uninterrupted intercourse with De Solis, whom I now never failed to meet at the Marchioness's. Engrossed with his new passion for Donna Elvira de Mosquea (your mother), Don Juan hardly ever accompanied me thither; and when he chanced to do so, I could not help admiring the artful manner in which De Solis concealed the terms on which we usually met, and assumed the appearance of the most complete indifference.

"I was at length entangled in the dangerous

gerous net; but if the most passionate adoration on his side, if the most transcendent personal endowments, and the dangerous charm of a pity with which he inspired me, till that pity arose to the tenderest attachment, be any alleviation of my fault, those alleviations attend my story.

"One evening, for ever engraved on my memory—seldom do we forget the anniversaries of the heart!—I found Adelaide alone, and in tears.—'I have been holding a long conversation with De Solis,' she said; 'this perplexing man has affected me. He spoke of himself more gloomily than ever; he calls you a jewel fit for the diadem of an emperor, and says that he would sooner die than dim its lustre.'—'He should have thought of *that* before he engaged my affections,' I answered, firmly; 'to deprive me now of *his* would be to sign my death.'

"As if desirous to efface the impression she had made, Adelaide proposed adjourning to the music-room. We there found

Don

Don Alvaro de Solis: he sat in a thoughtful attitude, near a fine organ, with the tones of which he had often delighted me. His head was bent over the instrument, so as to conceal his features; and so absorbed he seemed in what was passing in his mind, that for the first time since my introduction to him, my entrance was unnoticed by him.—'Here,' said Adelaide, laying a manuscript song upon the music-desk, 'I bring you the composition of a lady, to which you must endeavour to impart a little fire.'

"I have told you that Adelaide was fond of the reputation of composing small pieces of poetry: this was a translation from the song in 'La Clemenza di Tito' —*Quando sara quel dì*. De Solis started —looked expressively at me, and gave the air with a force and fire that indeed was all his own.



From

From the Italian of Metastasio.

Ah! tell me, trembling, beating heart,
When will content her balm impart—
When will you cease with fear to start,
With hope to glow?
The envious stars with fate combine,
If pleasure's ray one moment shine,
Soon as the tempting joy is mine,
'Tis changed to wo.

'Why did you choose those words, Marchioness?' asked De Solis.

"The peculiar tones of his voice, which I cannot render, alone made this simple inquiry impressive.—'Because it gives me a claim upon you,' replied Adelaide, quite unembarrassed; 'that song, like your device, begins with the words *Quando sarà*. I insist that you in return furnish me with a paraphrase. I am sure there is more in those mystical words than you have ever communicated.'

"Alvaro shook his head with a more mournful expression than I had ever remarked

marked in him, and appeared to wave the subject. The evening passed on between music and conversation, till Adelaide, who had letters to write, established herself in an alcove for that purpose, for we had now arrived at that degree of familiarity, that our presence did not interrupt her avocations. Alvaro and I, on the contrary, were enjoying the balmy evening gale, and the sight of the glorious setting sun, in the embrasure of a window, surrounded by exotics of Adelaide's native clime, which seemed to enclose us in a little foreign world.

"The conversation of Alvaro this night was pensive, but had none of that gloom which the Marchioness had described as tincturing the preceding interview. Sometimes, at his request, I touched the light notes of my guitar, and the intervals between were filled with desultory yet pleasing discourse, or praises dangerous for me to hear. At length Alvaro said—'Your friend made me a request, of which she

knew

knew not the importance. Truly she guessed I had sorrows yet uncommunicated; yet if, my Rosaura, you had firmness—you had courage—but no, you are too good, too pure—I dare not enforce a request; still be those sorrows a secret—but still my *legend* may be supposed to convey these sentiments;' and at the close of these incoherent expressions, Alvaro bent over the strings of my guitar, and accompanied himself to the following

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Sequedilla.

When exiled from pleasure
  The heart vainly sighs
For passion's rich treasure
  That fortune denies,
From Hope, soothing charmer,
  Some solace we draw,
Yet faintly we murmur—
  "*Quando sarà?*"

The maid, doom'd the anguish
  Of absence to mourn,
Through THEE leaves to languish—
  He yet will return!

Though the sun low in ocean
His beams may withdraw,
Morn renews our devotion—
Deh! Quando sarà?

" As Alvaro repeated this last line, his countenance, so interesting in all its varied changes, assumed a sublime expression; and as his eye followed the retreating luminary, you would have said he was actually drawing a parallel with his own state, and anticipating the rising of a glorious morn of honour and distinction. But I drew a different moral from the lay —it seemed to me a transcript of my own feelings, at the time that he had so suddenly chilled them with unprovoked contempt; and in the last lines I saw the grateful return of the sun of my too fond idolatry.

'The Marchioness commanded, and was not obeyed,' resumed Alvaro, looking at me with a most flattering expression; 'Rosaura

saura has made no request, yet I will venture to sing her charms.'

" He then, after a short prelude, broke forth into the following rhapsody :—

To Rosaura.

I prize but one, one only gem,
What cares my slumbers chase
Lest some more brilliant diadem
This peerless gem should grace!

I love but one, one only flower,
What doubts distract my mind
Lest in some brighter, happier bower
That flower its home should find!

Then shall I lock in casket rare
This gem, too winning bright?
Or shall I hide this flow'ret fair
From Phœbus' piercing light?

No—rather be those gifts resign'd—
Their charms be never mine—
Than that my ROSE should droop confin'd,
My gem unhonour'd shine.

" The allusion was too pointed to be mistaken.

mistaken. Now was the moment to reanimate or to damp for ever the presumptuous hopes of Alvaro. All my previous conversation with the Marchioness recurred to my memory—my fate hung on the reply I uttered.—' I know not,' I said, with a tenderness mingled with confusion, ' the gem of such a price, but that must be honoured by gracing the crest of merit and valour.'

" Alvaro sunk at my feet—' Rosaura, can I resist thee? no, no—thou art mine, mine and for ever!'

" He murmured this in a manner in which sadness was strangely mingled with joy. I was terrified at this crisis of my fate, though conscious what I had said was intended as an encouragement to De Solis. Can I repeat what he said further? is it possible to render transports of adoration only expressed in broken sighs, and murmurs of tender and impassioned gratitude?

" From this moment it was too late to retreat. Adelaide impressed on my mind

that it would be dishonourable to do so. Before you blame me, my Louisa, for being led by this dangerous woman, recollect that I was neither blessed with mother, sister, or enlightened female companion whatsoever—that I had received the narrow education that for us Spanish ladies is generally thought sufficient—and that I looked up to the talents and information of Adelaide, which gave her decrees the force to me of an oracle.

"As there was not the slightest hope my brother could be ever led to approve my choice, he was still to be kept in ignorance of the extent of my mad precipitancy. The history of my follies draws to a close—that of my punishment begins. An ecclesiastic, recommended by the Marchioness, was put into our confidence, and in an evil, awful hour, the guilty, imprudent Rosaura consented to become the bride of De Solis.

"About the time that this amazing change took place in my destiny, an alte-

ration no less singular marked the manners and habits of Adelaide. Her house was no longer the resort of company—her splendid habits were exchanged for a sort of nun-like costume (which however did not misbecome her)—her charities were profuse, and became the subject of general conversation; but still the greater part of her time was spent in a retreat, the secret of which was an enigma even to *me*.

" My brother, Don Juan, alone appeared neither surprised by her conduct, nor impressed with her sanctity.—' This is a new trick,' he coolly said; ' the last resource of the artful widow to move the heart of the obdurate Don Juan. In due time the secret will be conveyed to you, Rosaura, to be communicated, with the expected heightenings, to your inconstant brother; but it comes too late—it will not recall him.'

" As Don Juan pronounced these words in a tone of bitter irony, I wondered any human

human being could be so uncharitable—alas! he was only just.

"Adelaide at first refused herself to my entreaties to be permitted to share her sorrows—'No, never,' she said, 'will I so imbitter your first days of happiness.'—'Let not that stop you, Adelaide,' said I, in a voice that conveyed somewhat of reproach; 'the scorpions of remorse already begin to make me feel their stings, and my mind is in a state of dread and apprehension, that no trial, however painful, can increase.'—'Then if you indeed have courage,' returned Adelaide, in a hollow tone, 'TO-MORROW you shall accompany me to the mansions of wo that I have contributed to fill.'

"Notwithstanding my bravado, I own I shuddered at this introduction. Shame, however, prevented me from breaking my appointment; and we were conveyed in Adelaide's carriage, which, unlike her former equipages, had something almost funereal in its appearance, to a high prison-

like building, in the outskirts of the city. It was grated from top to bottom. I knew not what to think. I whispered a trembling question to Adelaide. She spoke for the first time since our entrance into the carriage—'My Rosaura, you will soon know all. The place to which we are going is neither a dwelling-house, nor a convent, nor a prison.' Her voice became more melancholy as she uttered each of these assertions, and she bent over a sort of case she had conveyed in her lap, which seemed to contain some musical instrument.

" As we alighted in the court-yard, a confused noise of shrieks and laughter, and the clanking of chains, was heard. I shuddered, and would have turned back—'Oh, Adelaide!' I exclaimed, 'whither are you leading me?'—'To the victims of the passions,' she replied.

" A man, clothed in a mournful sort of uniform, bowed respectfully to Adelaide; she whispered a few words to him, and he, taking an enormous bunch of keys from his

his girdle, led the way up a flight of stairs which terminated in a long and narrow corridor. He opened the third door by which we passed, and left my friend and me alone with the sad inhabitant of the cell. I beheld a man, whose neglected garments and frenzied eye too plainly told me *why* he was an inhabitant of the mansion. He hung over an old guitar, the strings of which were all broken and displaced, and tried, from time to time, in vain to awaken it to melody.

" At length Adelaide, perceiving he was utterly unconscious of our presence, breathed, with her peculiarly soft tone of voice, the name of ' Savelli !' The maniac looked up, and discovered a countenance that could never have been handsome, but that possessed the most interesting and passionate expression I had ever beheld. After a long pause as for recollection, he started, and exclaimed—' Adelaide ! for what are you come ? I have already given you all of which I was possessed, and you

see they have now left me nothing. I gave up my aged parents, whose hearts you broke when you lured me to destruction—for you I gave up the study of my heart, till then the blameless idol of my soul—I gave up family, time, talents, for you, Adelaide—what is there left for me to give?'—'I am not come to ask, but to bestow,' answered Adelaide, in an accent of consolation. 'See, Savelli,' she continued, beaming on the wretched man one of her smiles of witchery, 'in the place of that old broken guitar, what I have brought you!' As she spoke she opened the case, and discovered a finely-ornamented instrument.

"The maniac waved his head mournfully, and pertinaciously retained his old guitar—'No, no,' he said; 'it was on *this* I sung Adelaide's praises, but the strings broke when she broke my heart.' Then, making a vain effort to draw forth harmony, he sung, in a hoarse broken voice,

'Ah,

'Ah, tell me, trembling, beating heart,
When will content——'

"I looked earnestly at Adelaide—'Yes,' she replied, with composure; 'when you witness the atrocious consequences of my vanity, why should I blush to confess the more trifling effects of it? that translation, and all the other airs distinguished by peculiar pathos, that I sing, are not of my own composing, but were written and composed by that unfortunate man, once a celebrated musician at Rome—oh! would he had never seen me!'

"Savelli now changed the strain, and sung several fragments of airs, all of which I had already heard from the lips of Adelaide, with a pathos and mournful expression that wrung his hearers' hearts. During a pause, Adelaide, who had imposed on herself the atonement of visiting and alleviating the sufferings of her victims, took up the fine instrument she had brought him, and in order to make him sensible of its value, drew forth some tones from it,

which resounded through the melancholy cell with the long-forgotten notes of perfect harmony. But the effect they had on the poor maniac was dreadful. Gazing alternately on the instrument and the fair form that called forth its tones, a more perfect remembrance seemed to return of the witcheries that had undone him. The intense expression of passion and agony that mingled in his gaze was more than human fortitude could endure; and the keeper, who from a short distance witnessed the coming paroxysm, seized Adelaide by the arm, and hurried her forwards, while he said, in an accent in which compassion mingled with respect—'Is it your pleasure, madam, also to see the chevalier today?'—'Yes, lead on!' said Adelaide, in a voice of stifled emotion.

"A second door was opened, and a little mansion, the most fantastically gay, was revealed to our sight. It was strewed with fragments of written paper, and the walls were covered with writing from the top down

down to the ground. A man with a worn Italian countenance, but the greatest vivacity of address, called to us, in a voice of cheerfulness, to come in.—'How proceeds the great work, Santafiore?' said Adelaide, humouring, with affected composure, the poet's wretched state.—' To our wish,' returned the maniac, ' and would proceed faster, if you would but look in oftener, and help me in it.' As he spoke he smiled tenderly on her, but that smile was mingled with a look of wretchedness and vacancy that went to the beholder's heart.—' I have been preparing my house for your reception,' Santafiore resumed; ' see how gay it looks! how happy we shall be in it! They call me an apostate, Adelaide; but if I am an apostate, you are the cause of it, and yet I ever bless you. I had a vision—nor Tasso, nor Cellini, saw a brighter.' He looked at the small grating above him—' The stars twinkled brightly through my casement, and the sweet Virgin Mother of Heaven descended on a moonbeam

to

to console me. She looked on me with her dovelike eyes of pity, and opened her maternal arms to receive me; but I told her that I owned no other power but you, oh, Adelaide! that to you alone I sung my orisons.' As the poet uttered these words he threw himself forward in all the earnestness of adoration, and crossing his hands on his breast, appeared entranced in mental prayer.

"Adelaide looked in my eyes for compassion—'Oh, dreadful, fearful consequences of my errors!' she exclaimed.—'Surely, Rosaura, you must have read the lays of Santafiore, the first sacred lyric of Italy? and my sinful pride could be contented with nothing less than blasting that heavenly mind! Yet had I thought it would have come to this!'—She paused—turned from the appalling sight, and hurried me onwards.

"Her last victim struck me with a degree of horror unknown before. It was a Spanish officer, whom her blandishments had

had induced to betray a sacred trust; dishonour had succeeded, and madness closed the scene. No beam of love or fancy, as in the case of the musician and poet, alleviated the horrors of his fate. Death — death was the object that he incessantly sought, and that he had attempted on himself in various different ways. He preserved a constant silence, which rendered the frightful expression of his countenance more dreadfully impressive. It was now some years since he had been known to utter a word. This maniac appeared utterly indifferent to, and unconscious of, the presence of Adelaide. He was the victim of the sense of honour—a feeling whose wounds are, if possible, deeper than even those which sensibility or which genius can receive.

"With a heart oppressed beyond the power of words to describe, I prepared to return with Adelaide. When we had quitted these mansions of horror, she said, with solemnity—'You have been made acquainted

acquainted with many of my follies, you now witness the reparation I make. The church could not, in its ingenious rigour, devise a penance so dreadful as that which every morning I renew. To behold the wretched victims of my folly—to administer relief to the sufferings of such as *can* receive it—such is my life!—oh, would it were any atonement for the past!—that I could live over my life again, and recover the esteem of the wise and virtuous!'

"The dreadful scenes I had witnessed filled my mind with the most mortifying reflections. It was then to a woman so utterly incapable of guiding herself, that I had confided, in the most important event of my life, the direction of my conduct! still I could not resist communicating to my brother the heroic atonement to which Adelaide had devoted herself.

"His scornful scepticism remained unshaken.—'It acts well,' he said; 'but, trust me, I now know the Marchioness—(would, would we had never known her!) religion

religion has no share in her motives; she cares as little for the authority of a priest as of a husband. Perceiving her character began to be understood and appreciated, she has felt the necessity of retrieving it by some such striking measure. The share she had in the sad fate of Major Romanillos was, by an accidental circumstance, recently discovered, and much talked of; and the ruin of a brave and noble gentleman could not be as easily hushed up as that of two flighty Italians, who had come hither in her train for love; her story lies still deeper — her catastrophe soon will come!' *Mine* was to come first.

"Of all our household, Margarita d'Aguilar was alone in the secret of my private marriage, and, through her aid, the Palace of Almarez was no longer inaccessible to Don Alvaro de Solis. Early one unlucky morning, returning from a splendid court entertainment, Don Juan perceived a man in the gardens of Almarez, who seemed preparing to leap over a low wall, and on approaching

approaching nearer, he perceived this man was the hated De Solis. Instantly a part of the truth rushed on his mind, joined to suspicions still more injurious than the reality to my honour.

"Oh, Louisa! how fatal to me were the few moments that followed! Addressing my husband in the most insulting terms, Don Juan bade him draw and defend himself, telling him at the same time, that he did him far too much honour in allowing him an opportunity to measure swords with a Count of Almarez. From my window I beheld the combat—I beheld that beloved and lovely form, on which my eyes had never gazed but with fatal fondness, fall mangled with wounds, and bathed in blood, beneath an enemy's sword, and that enemy my brother!

"I rent the air with my shrieks. My women flew to me on hearing my cries; I incoherently bade them convey some succour to De Solis. Vain wish! he was already beyond the reach of my anguish—

my

my wounded husband had been carried by some servants of the Conde's to a place of safety and assistance, but I knew not whether he still breathed, when my brother entered my apartment, with the bloody weapon in his hand, to demand, in a voice of thunder, that I should render up a long account of my transgressions.

'First tell me that De Solis lives,' said I, rendered bold by that passion which takes little heed of dignities.—'Could I believe that question was dictated by apprehension for your brother's safety, I would answer it,' Don Juan, with a look of petrifying indignation replied.—'Oh, my brother!' cried I, falling submissively at his feet, 'say but the word you have not killed him—say but that he lives, though never, never more for me, and my heart shall bless you. Little it were to give up happiness, fortune, name itself, let but Alvaro live!'—'Your spotless name!' repeated my brother, and looked as if he could have spurned me.

"He

"He now required of me a complete confession of my folly, and in the course of my detail, learning how great a part was borne in it by Adelaide, he repeatedly muttered to himself—'Accursed sorceress! but her turn will come!' How speedily, how fearfully was this prophecy fulfilled! His tenderness for his orphan sister in the end revived; and kindly raising me, he bade me be of good cheer, and that all might yet be well. Alas! I annexed no other meaning to these words but that Alvaro might recover.

"Unable to fly to my husband, I dispatched D'Aguilar to inquire after him. He was removed from the house whither they at first had carried him, to his own lodgings. She found him in a high fever, and for several days the accounts continued most distressing.

"Relieved at length by his returning health and reason, I transmitted to him, by Margarita, a transcript of all I had suffered. The manner of D'Aguilar when she

she returned was so singular, that it filled me with unaccountable uneasiness. With my usual haste I said—'You saw him? he is better?'—'Yes,' she replied, muttering between her teeth, 'the Senhor is better.'—'Thank God! thank God!' I exclaimed, clasping my hands convulsively. —'We shall see,' rejoined Margarita, in the same tone, 'whether there is any thing to be thankful for or not.'—'Margarita, you terrify me,' I cried; 'for God's sake speak your opinion.'—'Why, Senhora,' said she, glad to have her tongue set loose, 'I do not know what to make of Don Alvaro—my visit to-day seemed somehow to derange him. When I rose to depart, he did not say (as he ought to have done), "pray sit and chat a little longer, Dame Margarita," so I, in a sort of huff, was hurrying on my gloves, when I perceived I had taken up a wrong pair, but they were women's gloves for all that. You never saw any thing look so vexed as the cavalier. He made himself very busy ar-

ranging

ranging the folds of my mantilla (to accelerate my departure, I believe), but I whisked past him with my usual dignity, and stumbled over *an embroidering frame*. At this moment a female voice within said "Alvaro?"—"Oh! your servant, Senhor, I interrupt you," said I, and flounced out of the room. Now, to be sure, these things might have belonged to his landlady, but ——'—'Enough—leave me, Margarita!' I exclaimed, while a sharp and burning pain, like that of an intense and sudden headach, for a moment contracted my brow, and the next left me sick and deadly cold.

"The good woman did as she was desired, and involuntarily sinking on my knees, I raised my eyes to heaven, and demanded what further remained for me to suffer. Alas! I was only entered upon the threshold of calamity! I now recollected with shame the encouragement I had given to Don Alvaro—the wish he had expressed to the Marchioness to desist from

from his pursuit—a wish which he had obliquely conveyed to me, even in the moment that I drew him into a declaration—I recollected that even the obtaining the prize that had dazzled him had never wholly obliterated the cloud of sadness on his brow, that he seemed still to have some secret reservation—some source of discontent, to remove which the possession of my tenderness was insufficient. I had, perhaps, a rival!—a rival who had a prior claim! the thought was distraction—and yet I was far from guessing how complete her claim was. On the contrary, as we hate to cherish distressing ideas, I began to seek excuses for Alvaro; I recollected that Margarita was ridiculously fond of seeing in every thing a subject of gossip and mystery; Alvaro must, during his illness, have had female attendance, and her fears for me had magnified the simplest circumstances into alarming appearances.

"I had just worked myself into this frame of mind, when my brother entered, and

and summoned me to hear him with attention.—'You are still on the entrance of life, my Rosaura,' he began; 'it grieves my soul that so fair a promise should be blasted. I have been considering how it is possible to save our family honour, and to retrieve your peace of mind. The means I propose will, at first, pain your heart, but they are the only means in our power; and at some future day you will bless the foresight of your brother. Consent to give up this obscure man, whose marriage with you cannot be regular; I will myself engage to reconcile him to the measure, so may you yet see happy days, and my countenance, my tenderness, shall stand between you and the whispers of calumny.' —'Never!' I replied, firmly, 'never! living or dying, I will belong to no other—I desire no higher fate than to be Alvaro's wife!'—'Then you will excuse *my* being his *brother*,' returned Don Juan, coolly, and flung out of the room, which he double-locked.

"I cared

"I cared not for his rigour—my heart was full of a project for the execution of which silence and solitude were necessary. I transmitted to De Solis a faithful account of what had passed between me and Don Juan; and with the proud disinterestedness of a youthful heart, declared my readiness to share his lot, whatever it might be. I begged that, as things had come to extremities between me and my brother, he would, as soon as he was sufficiently recovered, devise some means of my escaping to him. Every corner of the world was alike to me with my De Solis, and in performing the duties of a faithful wife to him, I was impatient to prove that if I had been too easily won, at least it was not in the power of interest or ambition to make him lose me.

"When Margarita (who alone had access to me) attended with my dinner, I hastily confided this precious effusion to her care, and charged her, by all her past tenderness, to bring me back, not only a

written answer, but a faithful register of all the looks and words of De Solis. I figured to myself his gratitude, surprise, and joy—the delight with which he would discover I was so unlike my brother, and the eagerness with which he would accept my proposal.

" She returned muttering maledictions, and for some moments (moments of agony) could not be brought to speak intelligibly; at length she said, or rather screamed— ' Ay, *I've* seen him! Wo be to the hour I assisted to betray the sweetest, loveliest innocence!—" Senhor," said I, " I come once more from the Senhora Donna Rosaura; you cannot imagine what the sweet young lady has suffered for your sake." He seemed dreadfully agitated—" Would she had never seen me!" he muttered, his personal vanity peeping out through all. I'll warrant me he fancies himself a fine sight for a lady's eye! he might at least have said, would *I* had never seen *her!*' —' Oh, no, no,' say not so!' I exclaimed, unable

unable to bear that such words should be attributed, even in fancy, to Alvaro.

"Margarita resumed—'So then I took out my letter—"See, here's what she says to you, and sends me to have your definitive ay or no to her proposal. Consent to give way to the proud Count, and have the sweetest bride snatched from you, to be shut up perhaps in a convent, for the Count has already begun trying with locks and keys, or——" He interrupted me, looking still very much confused—"Oh that she could forget me!" he said. "Margarita, I am unworthy of her love." He then began to read your letter, and as he remarked each separate paragraph, his countenance glowed, as you know it very easily does, and he repeatedly sighed, and exclaimed—"Charming, heroic, too charming Rosaura!" At length he sat down to a little desk to write, and wrote this answer to you, ma'am; and as he gave it me, he wrung my hand, and said—"Do not hate me, Margarita, for the veriest

wretch on earth is not more worthy of your pity;" and he forced a valuable ring on my finger, which I don't know why I did not return to him; only I felt so angry I scarcely knew what I was doing, for I could see by his false countenance——'

" I interrupted this detail by snatching the letter from her hand—it was as follows:



'*Don Alvaro de Solis to Donna Rosaura.*

'The offer of Don Juan cuts the knot of difficulty that perplexed my heart with anxiety. Accede to it, my Rosaura, and leave the wretched Alvaro alone to pay the penalty of his presumption. The proud Conde says true—never would he acknowledge me as a brother, and how could I bear to see my Rosaura pointed at, as an imprudent, disgraced, dishonoured bride! Rosaura, I was not born to be happy. In solitude and obscurity, I propose to expiate the madness of the few last months. Never will the name of Alvaro arise

arise to call a blush on your cheek, when shining in the distinguished circle you were born to adorn, while I alone shall carry the grateful remembrance of your condescension to the grave. Farewell, Rosaura! forget an unhappy man, whose ungoverned love has been fatal to one who is yet so dear to him.

'I could say more, for I fear you will not see the cruel necessity of our separation in the light I do—I could say more, but it would reveal a secret that might change regret into abhorrence; and, shall I confess my weakness? I cannot bear the thought of being remembered with hatred by Rosaura. This consideration checks my pen; but oh! my Rosaura, of *this* be satisfied, *we must part*, and all my consolation is, that you will enjoy many years of brilliant existence, when the grave shall perhaps have closed over the sins and the sufferings of the wretched

'ALVARO.'

"Such was the decision, such the answer made to the most tender and disinterested offer ever prompted by woman's faithful breast. You perceive, my Louisa, it was conveyed in language that possessed little of the tenderness, and nothing of the fire of love. To render the pain of my trial still more acute, the barbarous man seemed to claim my gratitude for piercing my heart, and with the false, false generosity of his sex, talked of not withdrawing me from the honours and splendours of life, when he had effectually deprived me of all relish for its enjoyments.

"I in vain sought in my mind what this insuperable bar to our reunion could be—what this fatal reason that commanded us to part. The recollection of Margarita's story came across me, and I also judged (and I am sure justly) that the opprobrious language used by Don Juan to a spirit as fiery and proud as his own, had assisted to quench the flame of love for

his

his sister, in a breast so fickle as that of the faithless Alvaro.

"Accustomed to look to Adelaide for consolation in all my sorrows, I bitterly regretted the confinement that precluded me from flying to her on this occasion; and on my solemn assurances, Don Juan was so far worked upon, that he gave me permission, attended by Margarita, to make her a visit. I was at first surprised at the species of hurry and bustle I observed in the Palace of Marialva. Instead of the numerous retinue that usually lined the antichambers, we were allowed to proceed unannounced, till I came to the grand saloon, where I found the Marquis Don Alfonzo. The first glance at his countenance terrified me. He was standing near a marble group, representing Orestes and Clytemnestra, and the expression of conflicting passions that appeared in his looks, had, from the extreme youth and beauty of the Marquis, a something more unnatural and dreadful than it would have pos-

sessed in a countenance of a different character.

"I inquired for his mother. At the word *mother* he started; but on my reiterating my question, replied, in a tremulous tone—'The wretched woman sees no one; but you, Senhora, are ever welcome.'

"Deeply shocked at his few and unbecoming words, I led on to the apartment of Adelaide. I found her indeed alone; her hair was dishevelled, and her dress disordered; the ashy paleness of her complexion, and the deathlike desolation of her whole appearance, contrasted most forcibly with her usual animated loveliness. Without looking up at me, and in the deep, sullen tone of despair, she said—'You are come, Rosaura, to see me die.'

"I approached her kindly—'Rather, my dear Adelaide, to seek consolation under the most overwhelming misfortune that has ever yet befallen me; but, alas! I fear that fountain too is dried up. For Heaven's sake tell me, Adelaide, what dire

dire misfortune has overwhelmed you and the Marquis Don Alfonzo?'—'The parricide!' exclaimed Adelaide, in a voice that made me shudder; then recollecting herself, she added—'he thinks that justice bids him listen to the odious tale—commands him to plunge a dagger in his too fond mother's heart.—Yet if I permitted, for I did not *do* the deed, was it not, ungrateful boy, for *you*—to buy you honours, and to give myself freedom?—for *he* had begun to tyrannize over both.'

"Dreadfully alarmed at the incoherent hints of Adelaide, I made a sign to D'Aguilar, who had followed me unnoticed by her, and who was dying of curiosity, to leave the apartment, and then besought her to relieve my mind of the intolerable suspense that oppressed it.—'Rosaura,' resumed the Marchioness, 'you pity me, and I deserve your pity least of all. When I thought it would recommend me to your brother, I discouraged your imprudent attachment—to revenge myself on him for

his neglect, I afterwards fanned it into a flame. Don Juan slights me for the child Elvira Castel Blanco—abandons me to my enemies. My character was looked upon by all even with suspicion, when a fiend, a spirit that I thought my arts had laid for ever, has arisen to complete my confusion, and I am reduced to the dire alternative of a base union with a presumptuous domestic, or to see my name proclaimed by the murderer Manuel as his (oh, dreadful word!) accomplice.'

"The horrid communication she had made overwhelmed her spirits, and strong convulsions rendered it necessary I should summon assistance to her.

"Reason no sooner returned, than, haughty to the last, she commanded her women from her, and then addressing me with solemnity, pursued—'I have dared the depths of guilt, yet shudder on the brink of infamy. I will not submit to be the object of public scorn—a spectacle for gaping crowds, dragged to receive the punish-

punishment of my guilt. Ere that I shall be free.

"As she spoke, she opened a golden locket that always hung on her bosom, and taking from thence some drops of an Indian gum, swallowed them.—'It is over,' she said; 'the asp of Cleopatra was not more certain death.—And you, beloved friend,' she added, as if resuming her tenderness when relieved from the insupportable dread of disgrace, 'grant me this last request—promise to watch *this night* over my poor remains—let them be prepared by the sisterly hand of friendship for the grave.'

"I rushed out of the room almost distracted, calling for antidotes, and summoning all who fell in my way into the chamber of the Marchioness.—'Away, away!' cried the struggling and now scarcely conscious Adelaide; 'think you I took this remedy to be restored to hated life? Off, meddling priest! your worship was never mine! I scorn your interdicts. Ye inquisitors,

quisitors, ye ministers of death, where now is your victim? fled to her native home—to the climate of the sun!'

"She laughed in wild delirium, and I listened to her ravings with smothered agony.—'What! will ye not receive me? where are your Indian tortures sufficiently exquisite for the wife who——away! believe it not, children of the sun! harm not the daughter of your kings. Place me to catch the breeze beneath my native Cordilleras—so! that will cool my burning brow. What! is that rock to crush me? hide me, ye Andes—bathe me, La Plata, in your silver wave!—vain, vain! it will not wash away my stains.'

"As the hour of death approached, a remarkable change took place in the countenance of Adelaide: her eye, so beautiful in health, rolled with something of an Indian wildness; her imagination, irregular and exalted at all times, now presented some of her past errors as virtues; while her reading and recollection only served to furnish

furnish pleas in extenuation of her crime. She turned from the crucifix, and all the consolations that our holy religion offers to the dying, and in her last faint struggles revealed the dreadful secret, that her Indian mother had made her a disciple of her own erring faith.

"Turning with impatience from her attendants, to gaze for the last time on the departing sun, she cried—'Soul of the universe! bright object of the worship of my fathers! receive, receive thy child! thy votary in a land of darkness! Let my spirit, a particle of thy fire, flutter back to the source whence it had its being; and Zuma, my mother, rejoice! the last of the Incas has avenged her race! Torture and madness have marked her devastating steps—the tyrants of Peru have been *her* slaves, and for the death of the *last* of the oppressors *she* dies!'

"I sunk awestruck on my knees, and breathed a mental prayer for her pardon. I rejoiced that the dreadful ravings of Adelaide

laide had subsided—they had only subsided in death!

"Such was the closing scene of the Marchioness of Marialva! The dreadful circumstances that preceded it require little further elucidation. At the eventful period that my father's fatal illness required my instant departure from the Castle of Rosignano, the youthful Don Cherubin Alfonzo, by some very great imprudence, forfeited the regard of his father, and was threatened by the late Marquis, whose anger was sudden and violent, with imprisonment in the castle. Altercations rose high between him and the Marchioness, and when they were arrived at the extreme, Adelaide was alarmed by a private communication from Manuel Ordognez, a gentleman in the service of the Marquis, that his master only waited till the spirited young man was confined, to inflict on his mother the rigours of a perpetual captivity. Knowing how well she deserved this severity, always detesting the Marquis,

quis, Adelaide promised unbounded gratitude to the man who should *in any way* preserve her liberty and that of her son. The next morning the Marquis of Marialva was found dead in his bed. Manuel Ordognez was loaded by the Marchioness with presents, but no longer retained in her service. Goaded, however, by a presumptuous hope and a secret passion, which he had trusted by absence to have conquered, this wretched man had unexpectedly returned, and given Adelaide the insolent alternative that drove her to destruction. Disappointed in his hopes, he rushed like a madman from her presence, and boldly denounced her to the Marquis Don Alfonzo as the contriver of the death of his father.

"Let me draw a veil over the rest of the shocking tale. With the death of his mother the sentiments of nature returned in the breast of the Marquis, and his youthful mind, overwhelmed with the complicated anguish that had so unexpectedly burst

burst upon him, was easily led to seek in religion the only consolation for the horrors which had succeeded his too early initiation into pleasure.

"To return to myself. I rigidly adhered to the promise I had given Adelaide to watch by her remains; and the sacredness and solemnity of my grief finding no refuge but in devotion, I made all the women go out of the apartment, after the last sad rites were performed to the corpse of my lost friend. Till midnight I remained absorbed in mental prayer. You would think that the too severe blows that had fallen so fast upon each other would have overcome my fortitude; on the contrary, *each* weakened the effect of the other. The stings of mortified pride and disappointed passion were stilled in contemplating the sad fate of my friend, and the shocking catastrophe of Adelaide was rendered less sensible to me, by the consciousness that my heart had been already killed by a blow which would have made it

it impossible for me to know peace of mind even in *her* society again.

"About midnight I rose from my knees —I timidly approached that small but lovely frame, in which such a world of fatal beauty had been included—I touched her hand, and my heart said—'Must Alvaro become like *this*? Can one day have made me such a wretch in love and friendship—can such dreadful, such complicated crimes have been transacted, and yet no trace remain in the external world? Others, with eagerness proportioned to their powers, are at this moment following the same mad career, indulging in the feast, the song, and dance, and giving and receiving vows of love. And can *I* lose this impression? oh no! *there are some sorrows that it were impiety to forget.*

"At this moment I heard a low strain of music. Mark me, Louisa, I do not say it was supernatural, nor do I say it was of this world—sacred be the vigils of those who watch the slumbers of the dead!

seldom

seldom do they communicate all that passes. I saw a flash like lightning--I heard a low still sound—an air passed over my cheek like the first breeze of the morning, but afterwards the surrounding atmosphere had a weight, as if yielding beneath the presence of some invisible being.

" Penetrated with a holy dread, I sunk down again in prayer—the music died away—an assurance arose in my heart that *through my means* Adelaide and Alvaro might both be yet forgiven. I felt raised almost to happiness, for though I have known love and sorrow, never was I capable of harbouring either jealousy or resentment. With the first beams of morning the women entered to relieve me from my awful and self-imposed duty; I took a last look at the faded features of Adelaide, and hurried home with Margarita.

" I had need of the religious contemplations in which I had passed the night, to endure the next blow that awaited me. My brother informed me that he had seen

De

De Solis, who had consented to yield up all claim in me, and that being now sufficiently recovered, he had that morning quitted Madrid, and was gone no one knew whither.

"Months after the desertion of Alvaro and the death of Adelaide passed with me in a sort of dull trance, from which I was only roused by the horrible prospect of becoming a mother under such afflictive circumstances. Don Juan had not been aware of my expectations, and when apprized of them, it was a new and severe blow. He however spoke cheeringly to me; and assured me, in his usual phrase, that all might yet be well. Alas! I had too well learned the import of these cruel words, and only anticipated some new and dreadful calamity. After all the agonies I had suffered, it was not surprising I should be told my boy was dead, yet sometimes strange doubts have beset me."

"Perhaps he lives!" exclaimed Louisa, "lives yet in Las Sierras!" and then at the

recol-

recollection of *his* uncertain fate tears gushed from her eyes.

"*That*, from the difference of time, is impossible," said Rosaura; "my child, if living, would be some years older than Las Sierras; and having now confided to you the chief heads of my disastrous life, I will briefly explain to you the nature of Las Sierras's obligations to me. Firm to the solemn inspiration I had received while watching by the death-couch of Adelaide, no persuasions could induce me to enter again into the gaieties of the world. I divided my time between the exercises of charity and of religion; and considering myself firmly as Alvaro's wife, I refused all other overtures of marriage; but in all other particulars my brother found me yielding as air. In penance for my dreadful faults, incurred originally by my thrice-repeated breach of his commands, I made an engagement with myself never, never to dispute his orders, from the most important to the most capricious request he could

possibly

possibly make me; and I have ever kept to this engagement. His generous forgiveness and tender care of my reputation have since increased my gratitude, for he has tried to make me amends by every endearing attention, for the one cruel sacrifice he made to family pride. When, disgusted with the perfidy of the world, my brother fixed his residence at the Castle of Almarez, I followed him thither, and by devoting myself to his comfort, and yielding the most implicit obedience to his wishes, strove to obliterate from his mind the remembrance of my fault.

"About this time the memorable pestilence began to ravage the country. One morning, while I was praying in the chapel of Almarez, a peasant woman, from the neighbouring mountains of Ronda, presented herself to me (*me* most unworthily celebrated for sanctity and merit), and besought my protection for a hapless orphan, whose parents had fallen victims to this devastating plague. I made in-

quiries

quiries respecting *those* parents, and learned, beyond a doubt, they were my rival and the faithless Alvaro; but, oh, my Louisa! what an additional pang was given to my feelings, when I learned that it was *I* who for a season had trespassed on the rights of another, and that before he had ever been introduced to a knowledge of my fatal attractions, his faith had already been pledged to Marcella in the mountains! This, then, was the secret which Alvaro had feared to reveal, '*lest my regret should be changed to abhorrence.*' De Solis, whose real name was Sylveira, was the son of an hidalgo of Grenada, who, destitute of fortune, was supposed to be roving the seas. His mother's sorrows and helpless situation had excited the compassion of the Duke de Solis, a neighbouring grandee; he sought her with no selfish or interested motive; he relieved her from the charge of providing for her deserted boy, and on her death, which happened

happened shortly afterwards, brought him up as his own.

"But all these fair prospects were overclouded by Alvaro's imprudent marriage; the Duke died irreconcileable, and Sylveira came to Madrid in the destitute condition I have described to you.' Here the name of De Solis, and his personal accomplishments, obtained him a passport to the society of the Marchioness of Marialva, and her brilliant flatteries, joined to the new and fatal passion of which I was the object, tempted him to avail himself of the complete obscurity of his mountain shepherdess, and conceal from the world in which he moved, that his misfortunes were occasioned by an imprudent marriage. Another thought strikes me—from what fell from De Solis that fatal night we conversed upon juvenile marriages, when none were present but Don Alvaro, myself, and the Marquis and Marchioness of Marialva, I suspect Alvaro had some floating idea of inducing Marcella to give up her

her claim, and that ambition was mingled with love, in the pursuit of which I was the victim. My brother's utter contempt, joined to the arrival of Marcella at a critical juncture, changed the current of his feelings, and I was made the sacrifice. Poor lost Alvaro! dearly did you expiate it!

"I was dreadfully affected by Ximena's narrative of his untimely fate, and the awful visitation that had fallen upon his offspring; but when she presented to me my rival's only surviving son, and besought me, by the most sacred names, to save it from destruction, I felt a suffocation and oppression of heart almost beyond the power of human nature to endure. I *did* endure it—I supplied a mother's place to Juan de las Sierras—I saw him grow up with his father's features, his father's voice, but not his father's frailties; and now——"

At this period of her narrative Donna Rosaura was interrupted by the entrance of Margarita, who accosted her upon a subject

subject with which the pious lady never suffered any selfish sorrow to interfere. In those times of warfare and trouble, Donna Rosaura, though unshackled by vows, eminently distinguished herself by her attention to the sick and wounded, in which offices of charity she was not surpassed by any devoted nun.

Margarita's message was from a soldier, once under the particular protection of the Duke (then Count) d'Almarez, and who had languished with incurable wounds ever since the battle of Talavera. Finding himself dying, he now sent humbly requesting to see the Lady Rosaura—and Rosaura, preparing to obey the summons of suffering humanity, commended the afflicted spirit of Louisa in a silent ejaculation to the compassion of Heaven, and hastily quitted the apartment.

Donna Rosaura's interview with the dying soldier was long, even to the apprehension of Louisa, whose affliction scarcely permitted her to take any note of time.

So much the greater was her surprise to see the usually dejected lady animated on her return with the most extraordinary emotion. Some unexpected transport seemed to lift her above the earth, yet her immediate impulse was on her knees to return thanks to Heaven, that had inspired her with a charity which had been rewarded by the most providential discovery.

She would not return a word in answer to Louisa's reiterated inquiries.—"No, dearest girl," she said; "your hopes shall not again be raised to be possibly overthrown and disappointed. Yet happier views sustain me. This hour I must be on my way to Cadiz—grant, Heaven, I be not too late!—Oh, my beloved Louisa!" continued the energetic Rosaura, as she strained the trembling, mournful bride, in a parting embrace to her bosom, "if the Almighty protection favours my efforts, I yet may save your husband!"

CHAP-

CHAPTER VIII.

——————— Most dangerous
Is that temptation, that doth goad us on
To sin in loving virtue. SHAKESPEARE.

ON the morning of Donna Rosaura's arrival at Cadiz, EL EMPECINADO, still all-powerful in Andalusia, had dismissed his circle of guerilla officers, and was indulging a few moments in solitary reflection. His decree was that morning to be executed—the decree by which he had, himself, condemned a friend, worn till now, like a brother, in his heart.

As he thought of it, his wonted energy forsook him—a tear even trembled in his eye.—"Away with this weakness!" at length he said. "Why should I reproach myself for what is passed? Las Sierras is a traitor—Yet, for one so young and—oh! once so dear—can it not yet be revoked?

 Impossible!

Impossible!—Shame, shame, Gonsalez! will you cancel a life of justice for a private feeling?"

At this moment he was informed that a lady of distinguished appearance demanded an audience. He ordered her to to be admitted, and beheld Donna Rosaura d'Almarez. She was attired in the deepest mourning, and when she threw back her veil, the sense of the import of her information, and of the task she had undertaken, gave an expression to her countenance that struck unwonted awe into the heart even of the fierce Empecinado.

"Be seated, lady," he said, in a respectful tone. "The holy fame of Donna Rosaura d'Almarez demands every observance from the stranger whom her notice honours. In what manner are my services required?"

Haughtily maintaining her position, which was standing by the table at which Don Juan Gonsalez had been employed, Donna Rosaura declined the proffered

courtesy,

courtesy, while, in a voice of dignified and subdued emotion, she slowly said—"Don Juan Gonsalez may feel assured I should not have taken a step so inconsistent with my sex and character, but from being impelled by a motive the most imperious—Don Juan de las Sierras yet lives?"

She gasped for breath, while Gonsalez answered—"He does—but his moments are numbered. The sentence is gone forth."

"Revoke it!" exclaimed Donna Rosaura, "as you hope to escape eternal torments."

"Would you had demanded of me aught else within my power!" returned El Empecinado. "Spain has run crimson with the blood I have caused to flow in the execution of sanguinary justice, and shall it now be said—'His friend became a traitor, and he dropped the sword of power?' You weep, Donna Rosaura. These eyes are strangers to tears; but Heaven is my witness that my heart wept blood, when, mistrusting my own firmness, I refused to hear him.

him. 'Tis past—it is my country that demands an example of more than Roman virtue, and she shall have it, though, in making the fearful sacrifice, I rend a brother from my soul."

"Thou hast spoken!" Rosaura, with a frantic cry, exclaimed. "Accursed Cain! Thy only brother falls in Las Sierras! and know, to thy confusion, folly was joined to guilt when he was refused a hearing, for never for an instant did he waver from the patriot cause!"

"Ha! 'tis not so: you say it but to try me," cried Gonsalez.

"Knowest thou this portrait?" Donna Rosaura resumed. "It is that of thy father, and the father of Las Sierras."

"By Heavens 'tis true!" murmured the terrified Gonsalez; while, gazing in trembling horror at the picture, he compared it with a similar one from his bosom.

"Lose not a moment," resumed Donna Rosaura, "let explanations be for a future hour—'tis your mother commands! This instant

instant sign the pardon of Las Sierras!"

"It shall be so!" exclaimed Gonsalez. Hastily writing a few lines, he summoned a subaltern in attendance, and gave it to him with a trembling hand, and with orders that it should be instantly delivered.

Then, throwing himself at Donna Rosaura's feet—"'Tis done!" he said; "those lines revoke Las Sierras's doom!" and, grateful for having thus narrowly escaped a crime that must have tinged all his future days with horror, he indulged the overflowing joy of his noble and impassioned spirit, in expressions of the most ardent gratitude to the noble lady who had stepped between him and the commission of it.

Donna Rosaura, on her part, in the sweet anticipation of the happiness that yet awaited Las Sierras and Louisa, felt her own youth renewed, and that she had not lived in vain.

She was now willing to give Don Juan Gonsalez some elucidation of her conduct. —"Strong must be the motive," she began, while

while the tears that chased each other down her cheeks were insufficient to conceal their crimson glow, " strong must be the motive indeed, that can induce a mother to unveil her secret weaknesses to an unknown child. Yet," she continued, resuming the air of command that was natural to her, "though deceived I was not dishonoured—*that* can only be when the *intentions* are not pure. Enough—the secret union, of which you were the offspring, was offensive to my brother, whose pride led him to contemn your father's deficiency in rank and fortune. Deserted by your father, *that* cruel brother, that no witness might remain to humble his greatness, told me that you, my child, were dead, and had you secretly conveyed away, to exist or perish in obscurity. His agent was conscious of the guilt of which he basely consented to be the instrument, and, to leave himself at some future period the power of, in some measure, repairing his wrongs, stole from me, with honest deceit, a portrait of your father, which he hung around

around your infant neck. *That* which I just now showed you is a copy, traced by the hand of memory and love. A merciful Providence conveyed to me the wretch's dying confession. He had secretly watched your youth and manhood, and owned to me that his remorse was increased by the discovery, that you who, if left under the guidance of a fond and careful parent, might have grown up an ornament to the state, from being abandoned, in the critical period of youth, to the guidance of your own judgment, adopted revenge as a virtue, and, moving like the scourge of Heaven——"

"Oh, spare me—spare the detail!" exclaimed the altered, and now softened EMPECINADO. "The dreadful precipice on which I stood has opened my eyes to the wickedness, the cruelty of my impious vow. Henceforth, oh, most courageous and most venerated of women! Las Sierras and myself shall vie——"

At this moment a sudden shout interrupted the words of Gonsalez, and blanched

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ed the cheek of Donna Rosaura. It came nearer, and the firing of guns was heard from the centre of the great square of Cadiz.

Gonsalez turned pale as death. Frenzy glared in his bloodshot eye. Madly starting up, he cried—"Anticipated? it cannot be!"

The noise, as of a countless multitude, still advanced. Cries of "Viva el Rey!"—"Viva EL EMPECINADO!" rent the air.

Too truly conjecturing their import, Donna Rosaura exclaimed—"Demon of vengeance! the measure of your guilt is full!"

Her words were prophetic. The counter-order had arrived too late. The trumpet's ear-piercing clarion now struck the aching sense, mixed with the heavy roll of the muffled drum—and a burst of artillery announced the close of the eventful scene in the last military honour paid to the memory of Don Juan de las Sierras.

FINIS.

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